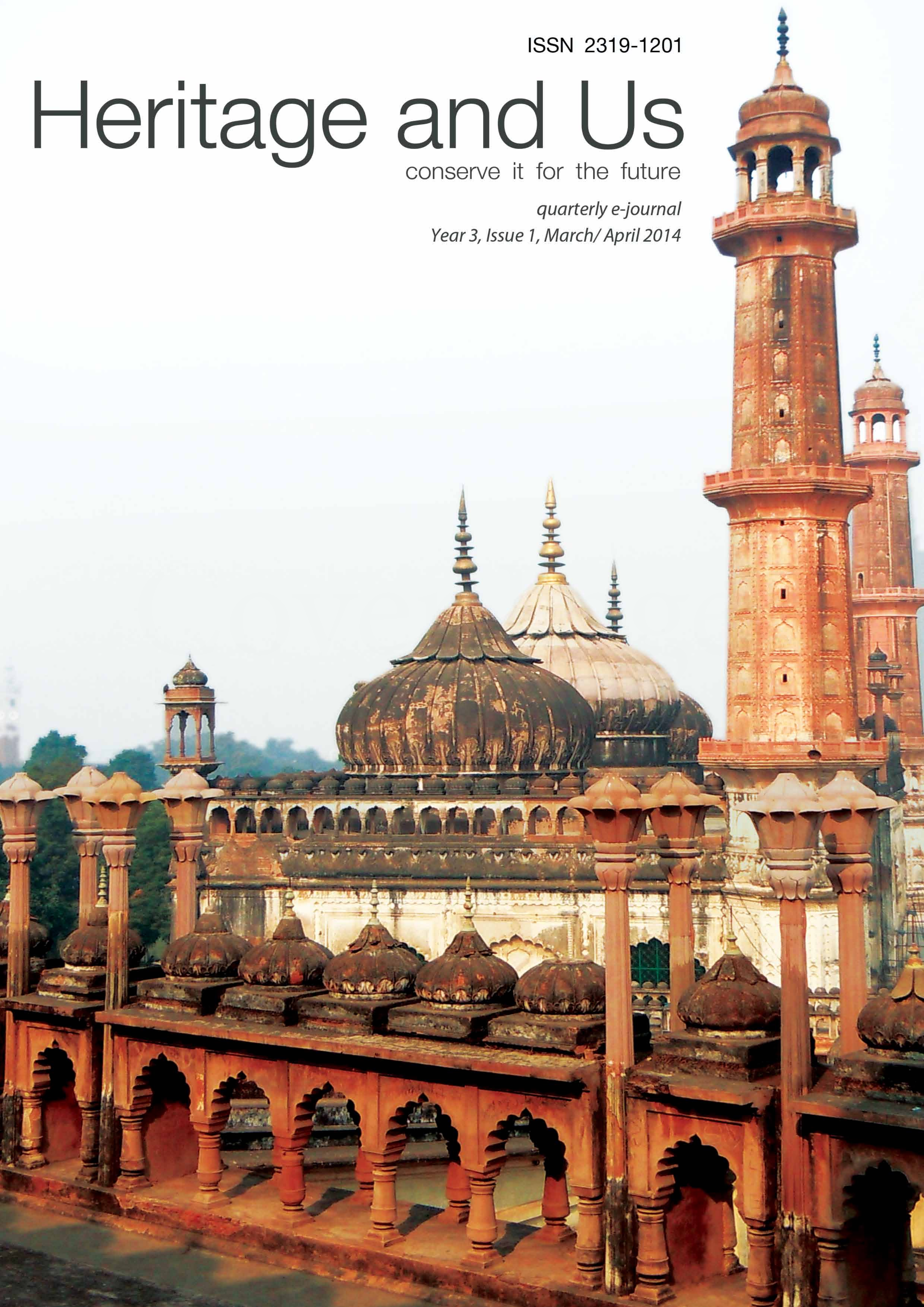
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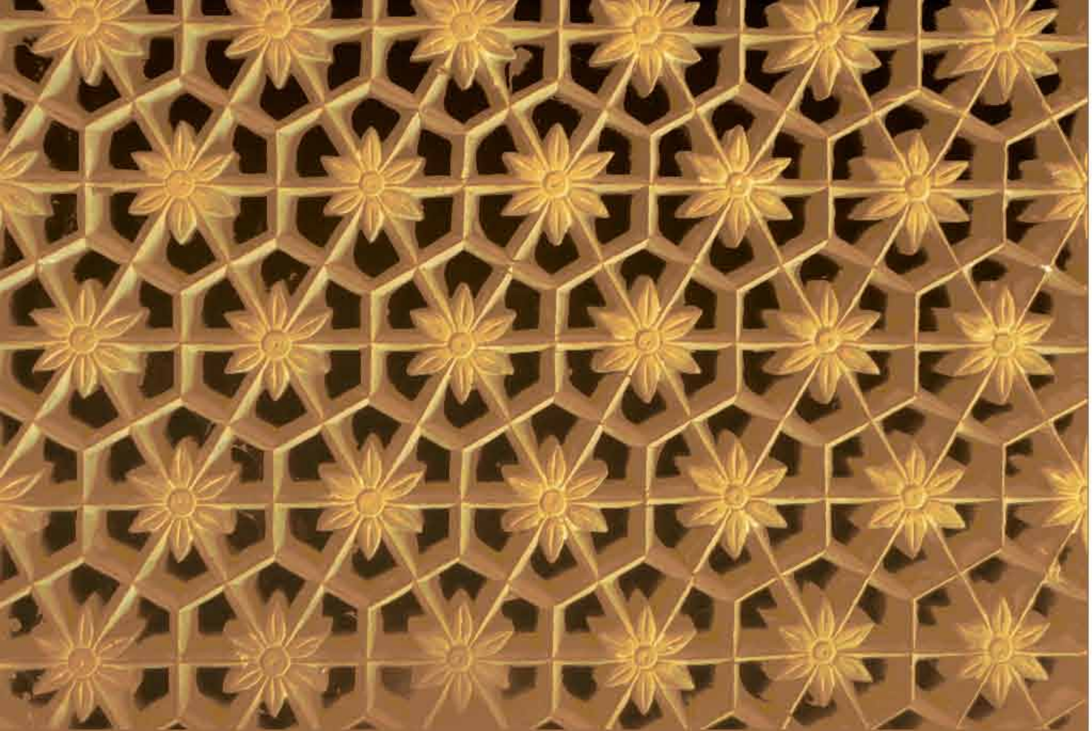
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Inner cover image (History and Archaeology): Jharna, Mehrauli, Delhi (source: RICAS)

Inner cover image (Museums): British Museum, U.K. (courtesy: Gurpreet Singh)

Border image: Chadya of mandapa, Viranarayana Temple, Belavadi, Karnataka (courtesy: Priyanka Bhowmik)



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EDITORIAL

Conservation requires conservators to make use of their creative skills, not only in their approach towards the works of art but also in the solutions they find. The young generation is eager to implement new technology-based solutions, and even though traditionally it is said that conservators are conservative, this professional need has been losing strength over time. We have developed a love-hate relationship with technology that is exemplified in the application of lasers and digital imaging. Laser technology was first applied to conservation some decades ago while digital imaging has been around since the 1980s. Despite the fact that these technologies are available, and even that there has been much research and development on these subjects, technology is still far away from the regular conservation workshop.

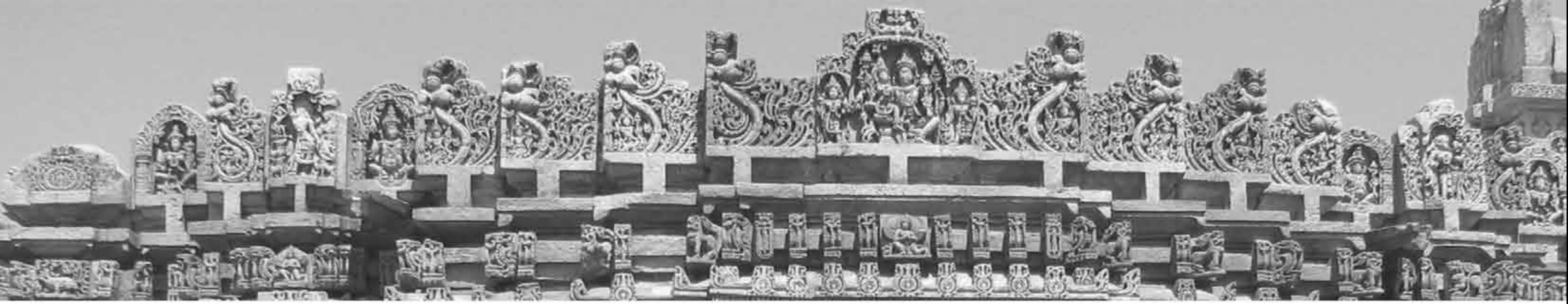
In the same way, conservation science is a field that has been emerging only since a few decades ago. No doubt conservation scientists have been developing a very important role in the safeguarding of our heritage. However, the massification of this new specialisation, now also taught in universities, requires a re-definition of heritage-related professions, and implicitly of ours, so everyone can act like the professional that he or she has been trained to be without running over one another's competences.

What really defines us, the conservators, is our decision-making capacity. This is not only based on ethical principles or material knowledge, but on a combination of many different factors. However, this main defining-factor is what distinguishes a conservator from a technician or from other professionals who work within the field of safeguarding or maintenance of cultural heritage.

Gurpreet Singh



History and Archaeology



Commencement of Buddhism in Ladakh: A Case Study of Alchi

Sonam Spalzin*

Ladakh (76°-79´´E, 33°-35´´N) is located on the northern most part of India and it comes under the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is situated at a height of 2500 m above the sea level, with passes as high as 4000 to 6000 m (fig. 1). According to Moorcraft, Ladakh is perhaps the highest inhabited land in the world (Alder 1985: 253). Ladakh lies between the great Himalayas in the south, and the Karakoram mountains in the north, which is known as the trans-Himalayan region where there are two further smaller ranges - the Zanskar and Ladakh range (Eakins 2010: 10). It is largely a desolate cold desert (fig. 2), rugged terrain, with little vegetation on the mountains and vegetations along the banks of rivers and its tributaries (Bedi 1982: 7).



fig. 1 A pass of Ladakh: Jammu and Kashmir



fig. 2 General View: Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir



fig. 3 Ladakh during winter, Jammu and Kashmir

Leh (capital of Ladakh), a town in the snow capped Ladakh region is an important centre of Buddhism (fig. 3). In discussion of commencement of Buddhism in Ladakh, it is imperative to provide an introduction because there

are several views and controversies regarding emergence of Buddhism in Ladakh among the scholars especially the westerners. They believe that Buddhism has come from Tibet which is not true. Archaeological and literary references proves that emergence of Buddhism is from Kashmir. This article is focusing on the evidences, which proves that from Kashmir, Buddhism entered into Ladakh and it is contrary to the assumption that it came from Tibet. When Buddhism was virtually relegated to oblivion in other parts of India, the theology dominates the religious landscape of Ladakh primarily by catering to the changing needs of the laity with repositioning itself in terms of alteration/ addition in the architecture, ritual observance; acting as social actant and liturgical officiant. Though heavily influenced by Kashmir, the pantheon has been shaped by arid climate, tough terrain, silk route and prevalent tradition; preserving the principles of Buddhist ideology of other parts of India, it maintained its individuality in stupas, *viharas*, *chaityas* and divinities.

Fa-hien to whom we owe the earliest account of Buddhism in Ladakh has left us a description of the faith in one principality in Ladakh, in 400 CE (Chohan 1983: 104). At that time, the country had a king, and a numerous clergy, all of whom were strongly attached to the popular Buddhist doctrine (Francke 1907: 40). Early centers of Buddhism in Jammu and Kashmir like Ambaran, Ushkura, Harwan, and Parihaspora, etc. (Kak 1971: 100-146) provide ample examples for its flourishing stage and adjacent areas like Kargil and Ladakh were frequented through a branch of silk route not only by traders but also by monks and itinerants, acting as a vehicle for the mobility of the religion.

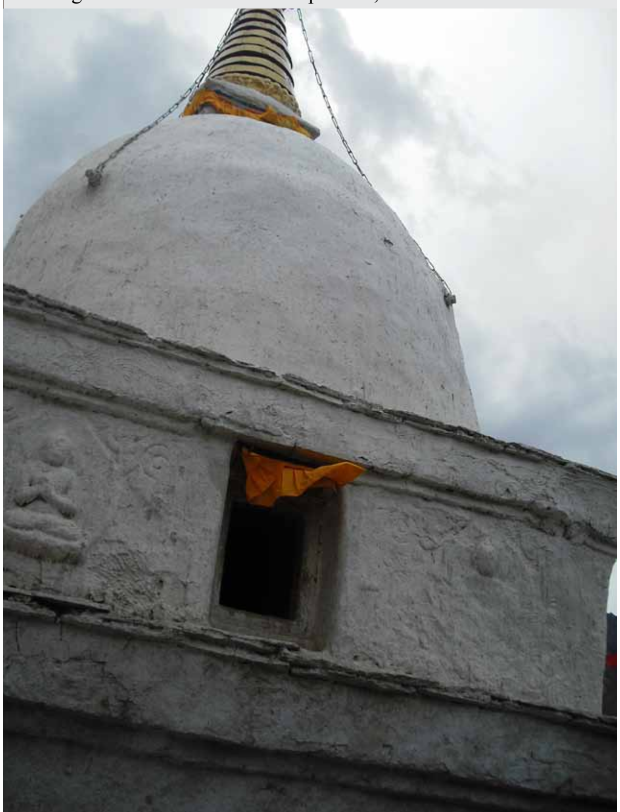
According to author's research, there are three phases of Buddhism:

First phase (3rd century BCE), during the time of Ashoka in about 250 BCE, Buddhism was a prevailing religion of Ladakh; and there seems good reason to believe that it had been firmly rooted there (Cunningham 1970: 316). The pantheon was introduced in this region during the reign of Ashoka when he was propagating Buddhism in all over India and outside as well. Around 243-241 BCE numerous missionary features were asked by Ashoka to spread the tenants of Lord Buddha. It was Sthatira Madyammika with his followers who were deputed to Kashmir and Gandhara for teaching Buddhism, additionally now also people of Ladakh attribute the spread of religion due to the initiative of Ashoka's missionary zeal. However, till date no archaeological remains of Ashoka's

time have been encountered in Ladakh except the scanty remains of Teri (Rigzin 2010: 227). Traditionally the stupa in Teri has been ascribed to Mauryan period particularly during Ashoka's time (fig. 4). Subsequent alteration and addition in this stupa made it difficult to delineate the external contour without preserving the features of Mauryan period. But it conclusively proves that dissemination of Buddhism to Ladakh was from Kashmir side and not from Tibetan as generally believed by many scholars.


fig. 4 Metal coated Asoka stupa: Teri, Jammu and Kashmir

After Mauryan period, the structural activity of Kushana period (1st century CE) was more prolific. During the 1st century CE apart from hoisting the fourth Buddhist council by Kushana emperor, Kanishka, stupa named Kanika at Sani in Zanskar valley was constructed (Snellgrove 1977: 8) (fig. 5). It is believed that the Kashmiri monks first settled at Sani in Zanskar, and built the Kani stupa (Francke 1905: 51).


fig. 5 Sani stupa-Zanskar, Jammu and Kashmir

The stupa, akin to other part of India was constructed over a square basement surmounted by a square *medhi* and its hemispherical dome on which stands an inverted pyramidal component which is finally topped by the wooden *chattravali* (Khosa 1984). The pinnacle is made of metal *yashti*. It survived till today exemplifying evolutionary success of Buddhism as well as initial influence

from Kashmir. The influence of Kushana's also shows from Kharoshti Inscription, reported by A.H. Francke (1972: 94) at Khaltse. According to local sources, Kanishka constructed several monasteries and stupa (*mchod-rtens*) in Ladakh and also initiated the large number of monks in Ladakh (Paldan 1997: 27). Subsequent scholars like Fa-Hien also mention that many stupas were constructed by Ashoka. The introduction of Buddhism to Ladakh is from Kashmir site, is also proved by the fact that emperor of Kashmir named Surendra also constructed a *vihara* beyond Zojila pass at Saurasa or present day Suru (Phuntsog 2004: 89).

The second phase is characterised by rock cut art, found in a prolific way from many places like Drass, Mulbek (fig. 6), Shey, Sangku, Paskyum, Padum, Tumel, Kartse, Sani, etc. where images were carved on different hillocks containing either Avalokitesvara or Buddha images (Bedi 1981: 15). Few free standing and independent images of stone were also found of Buddhist divinities from many places of Ladakh, bearing influences



fig. 6 Rock Sculpture: Mulbek, Jammu and Kashmir

from Kashmir. However, in this period, Buddhist religion of Ladakh interacted in a reciprocal way with that of Tibet, which became the base for subsequent Buddhism in Ladakh. This period also coincides with the time of Dharmaraja (Lhachen Spal-gi-goan) 8th century CE, during this period the religion of Lord Buddha "Buddhism" was flourishing greatly in Ladakh among the masses. Dharamaraja also is credited with the construction of first palace in Ladakh which is found as the ruins on the top of the present Shey palace (Howard 1987: 33).

Innumerable sculptures of Buddhist icons of varying sizes intricately carved on rocks are scattered all over the region, mostly in the same spot and natural ambience of the bygone era. These carvings are generally found in a close proximity to a settlement by a river, a stream or natural springs and according to the historians, these Buddhist rock sculptures bear witness to early introduction of Buddhism and Buddhist art in Ladakh from Kashmir before the Tibetan influence began in the region. Petech Lucaino in his book *The Kingdom of Ladakh* has attributed Buddhist rock-reliefs in Ladakh to the 8th and subsequent centuries, representing direct influence of rock relief from India (Petech 1977: 16). Similarly, Dr B.R. Mani of Archaeological Survey of India, says, "prior to the first Tibetan invasion in the 7th century and for several centuries afterwards the cultural inspiration came almost entirely from the west, namely after Kashmir.

The rock carvings and sculptures of Ladakh (fig. 7) broadly reflect strong influence of Kashmir tradition; the custom of carving colossal images from live rock in Ladakh may well have been inspired by carved relief in the Swat valley and Afghanistan. These sculptures were carved mostly by missionaries on their way from India (birth place of Buddha) to Tibet and other Central Asian countries.

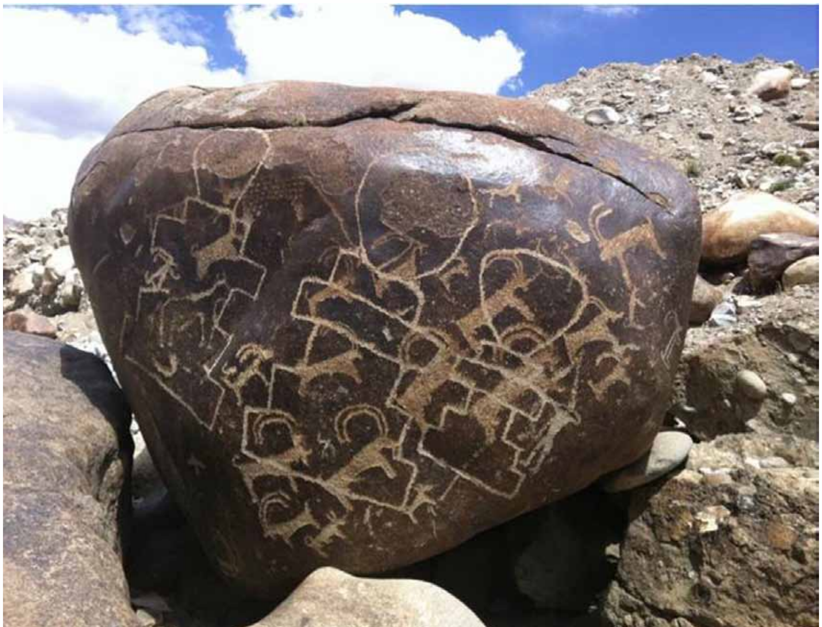


fig. 7 Rock carving: Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir

Third phase, 11th century CE is considered as the pioneering stage in the history of Buddhism in Ladakh. Lotsava Rinchen Zangpo became the most revered spiritual master of the land and the personal lama of the local royal family (Tucci 1988: 5). In 975 CE, he was sent to Kashmir by Yeshes-od to pursue his studies in Buddhism and aspects of Buddhism because he was not satisfied with the Tibetan form of Buddhism, as it prevailed in his dominions, and resolved to purify it by bringing it into contact with Indian Buddhism. He also patronized twenty one boys for education; one among them was Lotsava Rinchen Zangpo (Kaul 1998). For thirteen years he studied at the leading centers of Buddhism under many masters in Kashmir and other parts of India to receive instruction in Sanskrit and Philosophy. He returned in 987 CE to Guge and under the patronage of King Yeshes-od of Guge, he established 108 monasteries and a number of *(mchod-rten)* which spread in parts of Himachal and Ladakh. In addition to being a great translator, he was also great builder of temples and of stupas *(mchod-rten),* which disseminated in western and Indian Tibet (Tucci 1988: 10). In 996 CE, he started the foundation of a number of major temples including Tholing in Guge, Khochar in Purang and Nyarma in Ladakh. He did indeed return with thirty two Kashmiri artists some of whom may have been employed at Alchi.

The most illustrious of the Indian monk-teachers who responded to the royal invitation was Atisa Dipankara-Srijnana of the Vikramshila Monastery in Bihar. During this period, Nyarma Lhakhang was considered to be constructed first in the beginning of his journey and subsequently in the later period monasteries like Sumda Gonpa was constructed along with the ones at Alchi, Mangyu and Wanla in Ladakh. The oldest monasteries of Ladakh are believed to be built by the great translator Lotsava Rinchen Zangpo between the 11th and 12th century (Francke 1905: 51). Whether chapels or small temples, Lha-khang is almost rectangular, of the type of Alchi, Tabo and Lha-lun, described by Francke and Shuttleworth (1972: 10). From the high quality artistic traditions of the 11th to 12th century in the region it reflects this was the most creative period in the history of Buddhist Art. When Buddhism was declining in other parts of India it was flourishing here in Ladakh. Lotsava played a vital role to spread Buddhism in Ladakh.

Alchi (Lat. 34°14´´, Long. 77°14´´): The name of Alchi is given to a small village, inhabited for the length of about two kilometers and the width of at the most one, and extending

east-west along the left (south) bank of the Indus. Approaching Alchi, the river, flowing below steep rocks, twists southwards before turning west again, and thus separates Alchi from the nearest village on the far side, namely Saspol (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 28). This village Saspol is located on the left bank of the Indus. The main route from Khalatse through to Leh, 64 km distant at this point, avoids the southerly valley to the north stands the monastery of Likir (Klu-dkyil), which also has some claim to be an ancient establishment, although no sign of anything ancient remains (Francke 1972: 95). Now monastery of Alchi is under Likir. There is a path through this village to the Zanskar, via the Strakspir pass, which remains open during midsummer (*Gazetteer of Jammu and Kashmir* 1974: 166). On the right side of the village there is a link road connecting to Gyera-Mangyu. Monastic complex of Alchi seems unruffled by time as it lies at the base of a stark, barren mountain range whose harsh gray makes the whitewashed buildings with their red trim sparkle in the bright sunlight. The whitewashed walls are severely plain and are relieved only by a narrow band of red, recessed between two simple mouldings along the top of the various edifices. Only the assembly hall of the monks or the Dukhang is distinguished by a squat, square tower rising like a crown from the middle of the roof. Elsewhere within the walled, sacred enclosure are several stupa of various shapes and sizes without which no Buddhist monastery would be complete.

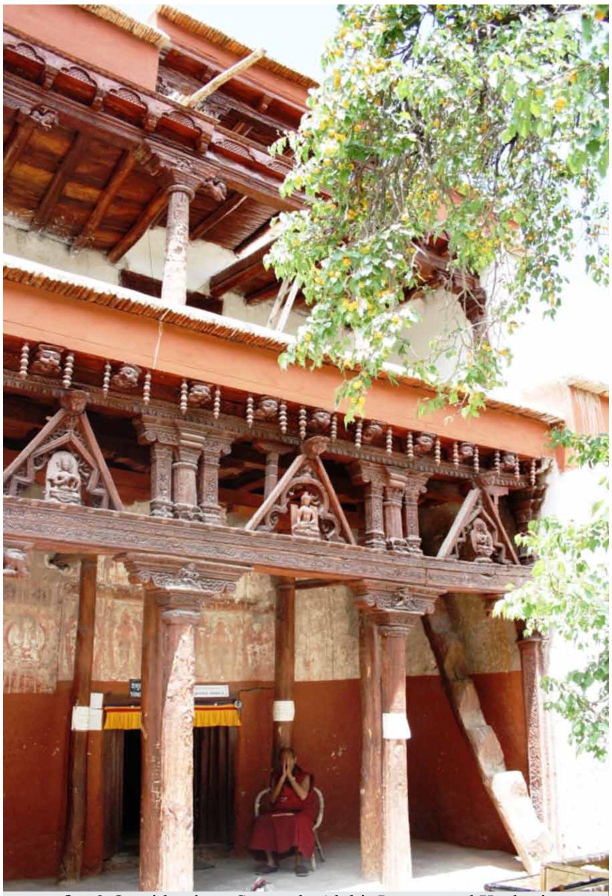
Alchi was built in 10th century CE, and the monastic centre of Alchi consists of small group of temples, namely Dukhang and Sumtsek temple, Vairocana temple, Lotsava temple, Manjushri temple (fig. 8). Among them Sumstek (three-tiered temple) is



fig. 8 Aerial view: Alchi Monastery, Jammu and Kashmir (Source: Srinagar Circle, Archaeological Survey of India)

most important. The main image is of Vairochana apart from the images of five Buddhas along with their attendants. There are also various forms of Buddha and Bodhisattva moulded in clay, carved in wood and painted on the walls. According to the inscription at Alchi, the Dukhang was built by Kalden Sherap and the Sumtsek by Tshultrim Od. Both belonged to the Dro ('Bro) family, but their exact relationship is not clear. Both had evidently taken the religious vows, but one inscription seems to imply that Kalden Sherap may have been married while another may suggest that the two donors were brothers. What is clear is that they were enormously wealthy, and the Dro clan to which they belonged was one of the oldest and noblest families of Tibet (Petech 1977: 15). They appear to have been a western Tibetan family which survived the kings of Yarlung dynasty in central Tibet and on several occasions provided queens. This ancient bond was cemented further when Nyimagoan *(Nyi-ma-mgon)*, descendant of the Yarlung dynasty and the founder of the Ladakh dynasty in the early part of the 10th century married a lady of the Dro clan. Thus, it is not surprising that members of the Dro family should have been wealthy and powerful in the mid 11th century. They appear to have provided governors *(Blon-po)* for Alchi and Sumda, where they maintained a residence and where KaldenSherap was born.

Alchi valley was prosperous at the time the monastery was built evident from the following hyperbolic description in one of the inscriptions in the Dukhang. In one inscription Kalden Sherap is characterised as the "teacher of Sumda" and in another he is said to have joined the monastery of Nyarma in his early youth. As one stands in this beautiful valley along the upper Indus, surrounded by lofty mountain with their snowy peaks visible in the distance one can easily understand why little less than a thousand years ago two wealthy Buddhist monks named Kalden Sherap and Tshultrim Od *(Tshul-Khrims-'od)* should have chosen this spot to build a monastery for the attainment of supreme enlightenment. The temple is nucleus of village. When one enters the main gate of the temple, stupas are scattered and in rows temples are located. *Panchayatana* stupa is located next to the entrance gate of Alchi monastery. The poplar tree outside the entrance is believed as it was the original walking stick of Lama Lotsava Rinchen Zangpo (Paldan 1977: 8). There are three main temples in Alchi.


fig. 9 Outside view: Sumtsek, Alchi, Jammu and Kashmir

Dukhang and Sumtsek Temple: The temple Sumtsek means three storied or three tiers (fig. 9) constructed with mud bricks with a high entrance porch that is supported by carved wooden columns and beams (Das 2009: 47). It is carved with wooden façade (Gupta 2003: 18-19). Figures of Buddha's paintings are depicted on the entire wall surface of the chapel (fig. 10). None of the paintings are depicted on the ceiling of the sky light. Pillars on the middle of the chapel are fluted ones. Towards three cardinal directions it contains niches housing images of Avalokiteshvara, Maitreya and Majushri in clockwise direction (Khosa 1984: 55). Each image is modeled in stucco (fig. 11) in standing position having four arms and idol is fully painted. Each image is flanked on each side by two figures. At the centre of the shrine houses a stupa. The stupa on the other hand is flanked by two pillars supporting the raised ceilings to make the stupa three tiered. Top two tiers are also painted. The temple is fronted by an elate façade of wooden structure which is very finely carved supported by two pillars and pilasters. The portion


fig. 10 Painting inside Chapel: Alchi, Jammu and Kashmir


fig. 11 Stucco figurine: Alchi, Jammu and Kashmir

above the beam is also decorated with the figures of Avalokiteshvara where both the side of the figure magnificent paintings of the Buddha Amitabha on a peacock throne, and Buddha within trefoil arch in the centre. The top of the bracket is design with a row of protruding leonine figures (*Kirtimukha*) intersperse with lattice pattern. These figures are bordered below by rows of petals and floral motifs. The pilasters are fluted supporting on its bracket a ramped lion which is similar for other pilaster as well. The two pillars in the centre were also fluted supported by circular abacus and expanding capital which is decorated with floral motif and adored with the figure of Buddhist divinity. The top portion of the temple is also exclusively carved supported by two pillars exhibited in lattice pattern within trefoil arch. Further its top is also raised to make the structure three storied by two pillars and pilasters. Lower portion is of random rubble masonary and upper portion is of mud bricks. The figures are very renowned for their drapery in which Buddhist divinities are depicted in polychrome. Minute painting done on the drapery is very unique all over India.

The whole wall was painted with a figure of blue color Buddha (Akshobhya) in *bhumisparsha-mudra* with in a halo while other walls are painted with the figurine of five Dhyani Buddhas. On other side theme is Mahakaal in rectangular flanked by figures, and by Buddha in surrounding (Pal 1982: 46). Ceiling was raised to provide skylight and height to the structure. In the centre there were two pillars. Every pillar is either fluted (edge concave) or faceted. To mark each floor, they have given a row of willows. Top of the ceiling is also sealed with willow.

The principal temple is the Sumtsek which is the only building with three floors. The whole surface of the wall and the ceiling is fully covered with painting. The Lotsava Lhakhang, or the translator's temple and the shrine dedicated to Manjushri, are small and adjacent structures, while the Lhakhang soma or the new temple, as its name indicates, was probably a later addition (Khosa 1984: 55-56).

Vairocana Temple: This temple houses deity of Vairocana flanked on either side by two Dhyani Buddhas on the niches facing the entrance. In this temple, entire walls are painted with *mandalas* and large numbers of figures of Buddhas. Maitreya image in a particular linear fashion than form in group of many shapes - circular, square, etc.

Dvarasakhas decorations were depicted on the door jambs. Beyond this there is a large hall, walls of which are painted with the motif from the Kashmir, wheel of life is also depicted on the wall.

Lotsava Temple: Lotsava is a small shrine fronted by a verandah supported by two pillars and two pilasters. While entering the Lotsava temple, one comes across a table on which a gilded stucco image of Buddha Sakyamuni, in *bhumisparsha mudra*, is installed (Khosa 1984: 75). Circular pillars are topped by brackets with lion figures while the ceiling is carved with a row of floral motif topped by a row of joist ends in the form of alternative lions-heads. The back wall contains a rest platform on which an image of Buddha is placed robed in red and yellow colour. The walls on the other sides are painted with the *mandala* images and Buddha images in very unique depiction of drapery. In this temple only there is depiction of Lotsava, the great translator in painting (fig. 12). The facade is supported with two pillars and two pilasters on the verandah. Buddha statue is enshrined in the centre. This is a replica of the previous structure.



fig. 12 Rinchen Zangpo Painting on wall of the temple: Alchi, Jammu and Kashmir

Paintings on the wall are wheel of life and Mahakaal over the main door (Das 2009: 48). In the center two fluted pillars are standing supporting the raised ceilings. Equitably carved wooden entrance was very small. However, the shrine is fronted by a verandah supported by two pillars and pilasters. Joist ends of this ceiling are carved in the form of lions. Motifs like *Tsetapa, Tsonkapa-Stanba, Jovo Rinpochey, Padmasambhava,* wooden *mandala* of Vajra, Bhairava are installed and consecrated by most of the temples.

Some of the motifs are copies from Sumtsek (Pal 1982: 60).

Manjushri Temple: It is unique in the sense that the elevated platform is found in the middle of the shrine on which four images of Manjushri are placed. It leaves a very narrow space for *pradakshinapatha*. The walls are plastered and painted on the right side of the interior where the earliest paintings are cropped off and in its place new paintings are made. Rest of the walls is painted with the figures of Buddha. Wheel of life, Avalokiteshvara, Mahakaal have also been depicted. On the entrance wall some of the new paintings can be seen. In all the cardinal directions there are different forms of Manjushri. The murals in the Manjushri Lhakhang are badly damaged, but it contains elaborately enthroned stucco images of Manjushri, which, although garishly painted in recent years, are as old as the sculptures in other temples.

Paintings: The murals at Alchi are simply the banner paintings on silk or cotton that one encounters in Central Asia, Tibet, Nepal or Japan, transferred to the surface of a wall (fig. 13). This is also true of the relatively few narratives friezes that are in the verandah of the Dukhang in the Sumtsek or in the Lhakhang Soma, mostly depicting scenes from the *Jatakas* (previous birth stories of Budhha) or from the life of Sakyamuni. The various sequences are divided into small composition by their monochrome backgrounds of red, white, green or blue. Clearly, the artists have here transferred to the wall the narrow, horizontal scrolls that were once very common in India and survive mostly in Nepal today.



fig. 13 Mural paintings: Alchi, Jammu and Kashmir
(Source: Srinagar Circle, Archaeological Survey of India)

Common characteristics belong to the aesthetic tradition that the artists at Alchi inherited,

whether they were from, Magadha or Khotan or were local recruits, and whether they were professional Kashmiris or monks. The aesthetic language was the same, but the dialects differed, and within each dialect, one can discern different idioms and expression, divergent literary forms and styles, some elegant and others prosaic, some flexible and others rigid, some fluid and others limpid. Some of these variations are obvious, but others are more subtle and less easily perceptible. Horse riders are a favorite motif of the Sumtsek artists and have been included frequently, the most prominent group being those riding across the left side of Avalokitesvara.

These monasteries can be easily distinguished from the rest of the Ladakh monasteries, their special marks are as follows:

- The door beams and lintels are very thick and ornamented all over with mythological wood-carvings.

- Of special interest are the galleries, if they have been preserved, as, for instance, at Alchi, with their trefoil arches in genuine Kashmiri style.

- The large hall is decorated with paintings only: if there are images in it nowadays they are later additions. These paintings represent Buddhist saints, often nude and in a standing position, and are sometime painted on oval medallions which rise a little above the surface of the wall (Francke 1905: 51-52).

Conservation

Conservation in Alchi happened during different periods of time. The dilapilated/fallen main wall to the east of Dukhang temple was reconstructed in stone-masonry. Mud plaster was also applied over its surface. The drain was also covered with slate stones (*IAR* 1994-95). Random rubble pathway over base concrete towards Lotsva Lhakhang was provided. The porch of Sumstek, Lotsva Lhakhang and Manjusri Lhakhang were provided with stone pitching. The steps in front of the Dukhang were repaired. Retaining wall was constructed on the northern side (*IAR* 1995-96). In order to stop percolation of rain/snow-water into the shrines, the roof tops were water tightened by removing the decayed earth packing and replacing with fresh earth and plastering.

A flag-stone pathway around the chortens is also laid. Damaged and loose mud plasters on the walls of the shrines were also raked out and replastered (*IAR* 1996-97). The leaking roof of the Lhakhang soma was water tightened and plastered after removing the earth packing. The damaged compound wall on the back side of the Lhakhang soma was also repaired in accordance with the original pattern (*IAR* 1997-98). Lime concrete was provided around the chorten in order to stop seepage of water in foundation (*IAR* 1999-2000). The height of the boundary wall of the monastery was increased after carrying out necessary repairs. The chorten along the northern *pradakshinapatha* on the back side of the Manjushri and Lotsava Lakhang was repaired and retaining wall was also provided to strengthen foundation of these chortens. Necessary repairs, water tightening and re-setting were also carried out to the dilapidated porches of the Manjushri and Lotsava Lakhang. The damaged, deflected, broken and missing wooden members of the roof of these porches were substituted with new ones matching the original.

The damaged wooden beams/rafters were replaced after careful dismantling of the roof of the Dukhang (assembly hall). Besides these the rotten and damaged wooden planks of roof were replaced with new ones and water tightening to the roof was also done. Additional wooden beams, columns and brackets were provided to be containing the holy relics of Buddha located in the courtyard of the Dukhang (*IAR* 2001-02).

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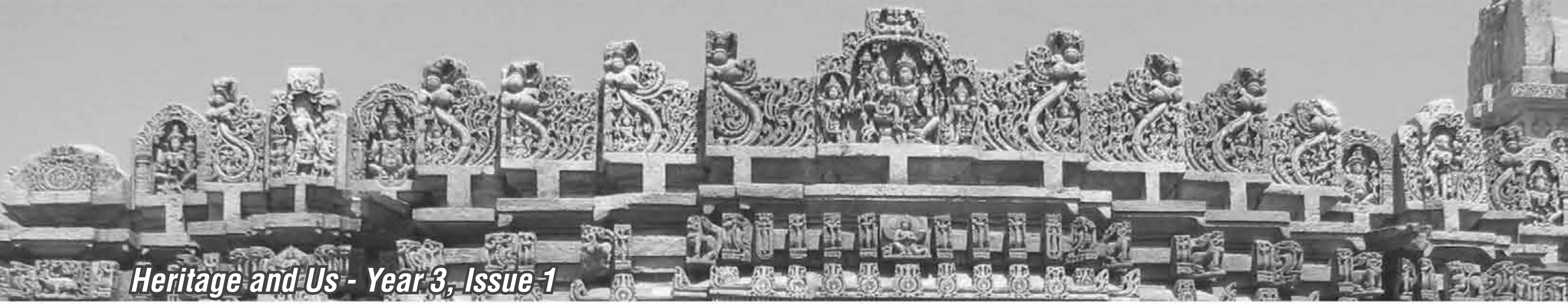
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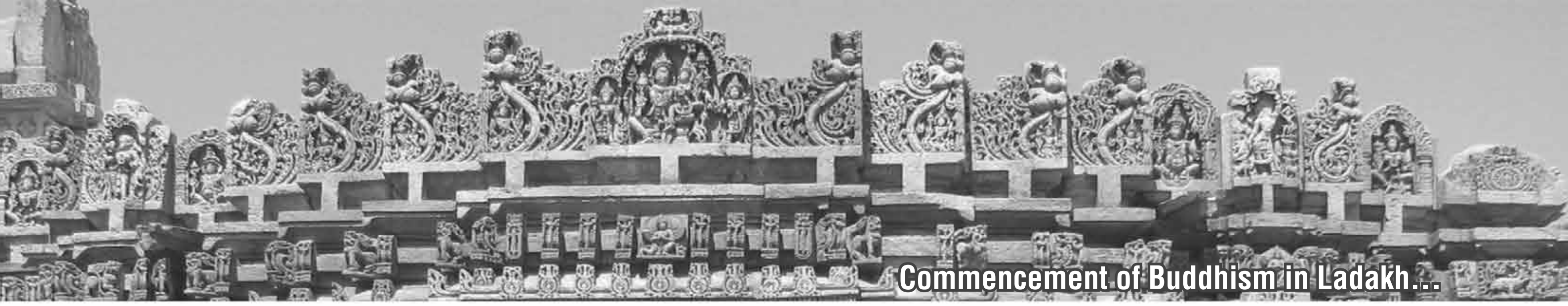
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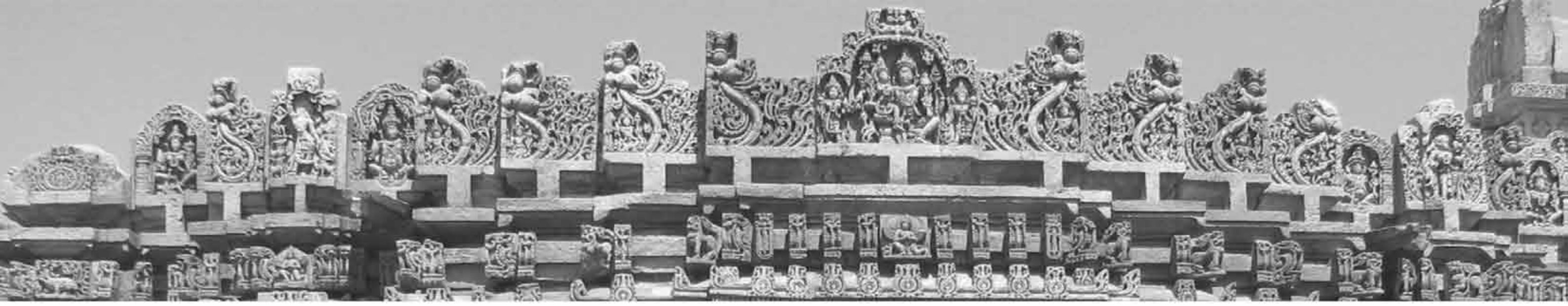
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About the author

* sonamspalzin.asi@gmail.com

Dr Sonam Spalzin is working as an archaeologist with Archaeological Survey of India. She has done her doctorate in archaeology and her areas of research are Buddhism in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, archaeology and art history. She has published a number of articles in renowned national and international journals and books.



Viranarayana Temple at Belavadi: A Glimpse of its Historic Past

Priyanka Bhowmik*

A temple is a symbol or rather an aggregate of various symbols. It is ritually invested with human personality or Vāstupuruṣa and conceived in terms of human organism which is most evolved living form. Names of various parts of the human body are used for the structural parts of a temple to give a concept of organic unity in it. These are given in many of the Indian architectural texts. Evidently, even the most active body is lifeless without the resident soul. To a devotee, temple is the abode of God who is the spirit immanent in the universe. Hence worship constituting the living use of the temple starts with the installation of life in the form of the deity in the sanctum (Deva 1995: 1).

There are different styles of temple architecture and one such popular style is Dravida which is especially popular in the parts of Southern India. However, during the Hoysala period (10th-13th century CE), a different temple architectural form developed known as Southern Karnāta or Karnāta Drāvida style which was distinguished from the traditional Drāvida style. It was considered as an independent architectural tradition with many unique features. The Hoysala temples were built on the major trade routes that linked the northern and southern parts of the kingdom and also the eastern towns with the seaports on the west coast. Hoyasalas built their temples on the banks of the rivers or tanks, or within towns, villages and agrahāras (Collyer 1990:33).

The earliest temple built by the Hoysala dynasty is the Lakṣmīdēvī temple at Doḍḍa Gaddavaḷḷi datable to 11th century CE. The important temples of this dynasty are located at Talakāḍ, Bēlūr, Haḷēbīḍu, Hulīkēre, Amṛtapura, Belavāḍi, Arasīkere, Sōmanāthapura, Nuggēhaḷḷi, Araḷaguppe, Jāvagal, etc. The Vīranārāyaṇa temple at Belavadi is one of the lesser known temples of the Hoysala dynasty which is architecturally significant as well as a very important Vaiṣṇavite shrine of that period. Such temples should be studied in detail to know the role that it played in the past and also its significance in the present.

Historical Background

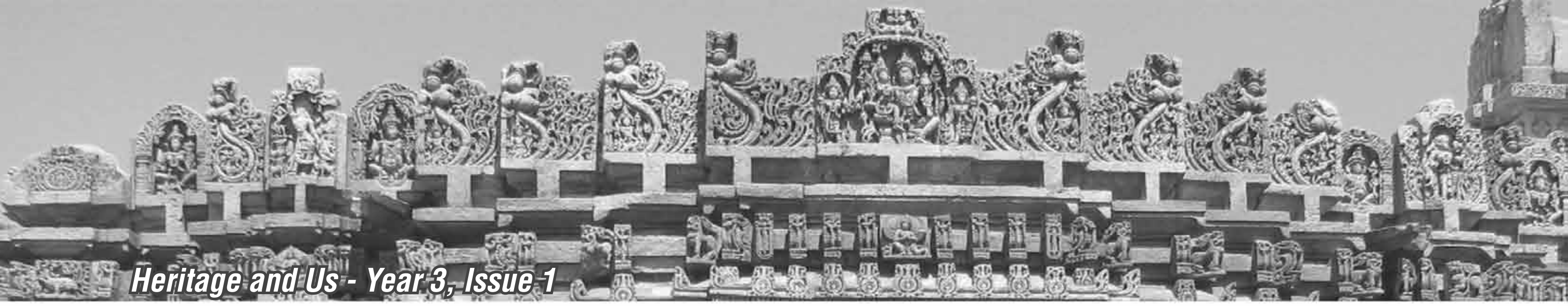
The Hoysaḷa dynasty ruled for about 350 years with not less than 14 kings (1000-1346 CE). Starting from Soseyur or Sosavur, a small settlement (now called Angaḍi) in Mudgere taluk of the district Chikkamagalur, they expanded over major portions of South India (Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala). Their domination on the Tungabhadra-Kaveri region lasted for about 300 years (Settar 1992: 3).

The majority of the Hoysaḷa kings enjoyed a long period of rule, averaging between 30 and 40 years. The credit for ruling the kingdom for the longest period of time is given to Vinayāditya of the 11th century CE but the veracity of the alleged 88 year rule (1012-1100 CE) of this king is questioned by some scholars (Settar 1992: 3). With the exception of Vīra Narasimha II (1220-1235 CE), almost all the other Hoysaḷa kings occupied the throne for more than thirty years. Besides Vinayāditya, who ruled for the longest period, Vīra Ballāla II (1173-1220 CE) and Vīra Ballāla III (1292-1343 CE) also ruled for 47 and 51 years respectively (Settar 1992: 4). Among those who hardly ruled for an appreciable length of time were Viśvanatha (1294-1297 CE) and Vīra Ballāla IV (1343-1346 CE), while Ereyanga (1098-1102 CE) and Ballāla I (1102-1108 CE) were among those who ruled for only about half a dozen years (Settar 1992: 4). A comparatively long period of rule enjoyed by the majority of kings not only enabled the Hoysaḷa dynasty of the 12th and 13th centuries to distinguish themselves in political and military fields, but also to contribute culturally.

The architectural style of this dynasty is an offshoot of the Kalyana Cālukya style which was popular from 10th century CE till the end of 11th century CE. The availability of chloritic schist in the region made it their basic material for construction of the temples.

Location and History of the Temple

The Vīranārāyaṇa temple is located at Belavadi, a village in the Chikkamagalur district of Karnataka (Chikkamagalur taluka). This small town was also known as Ekachakranagara according to the local legends. Belavadi is a village about 8 km north of Halebidu on the Banavar-Belur road. This temple was constructed in 1206 CE, during the rule of Vira Ballala II (M.A.A.R. 1923: 3). Then it became a Jagir granted by



Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar II in 1760 CE to the Sringeri Matha. During the time of the early Hoysaḷa kings it seems to have been an important Jaina settlement. Two inscriptions carved on a single slab of stone standing on the site of the old village (Hale Belavadi), Belur, dated 1160 CE respectively, record the grant of certain lands to the God Jannesvara of Belavadi. It is said that there was a Jaina Basadi in the village, though no traces of the same could be discovered. It also appears that many pillars and other carved stones presumably of some Jaina Basadi lie submerged in the village tank bed (M.A.A.R. 1923: 3).

When the temple was completed, a long inscription in Hoysaḷa Kannada characters was inscribed on a very large soap stone slab and set up at the south east corner of the temple. This slab fell down years ago, was broken into two and its inscription is almost completely effaced. The sculptured panel on the top of the inscription is also ruined but since Lord Nārāyaṇa stands in it with Venugopāla on his right and Yōga Narasimha on his left, it is gathered that when the inscription was set up all the three shrines had been constructed and the temple was complete in its present form. A smaller fragment of stone having the inscription standing close by is greatly damaged, yet gives us the information that in the year 1128 (1206 CE) some lands were granted under some tank for the worship of Lord Vīranārāyaṇa (M.A.A.R. 1933: 81). It means that the Vīranārāyaṇa shrine was at least in existence before 1206 CE. Whether the eastern part of the temple was in existence at that time is not clear, though it can be said that the other deity mentioned in the inscription is neither Venugopāla nor Yōga Narasimha. It may, however be stated that the eastern part of the temple and the dvāramaṇḍapa are an afterthought, since the cloistered verandah separates them from the western part of the temple (M.A.A.R 1933: 81) (fig. 14).


fig. 14 Front view: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/Shivakanth Rao, 2012)

Art and Architecture of the Temple

The Vīranārāyaṇa temple complex is a Vaiṣṇava temple of the Trikūṭacala type consisting of three main shrines (fig. 15). This temple complex can be divided into two sections. The first section has the shrine on the west with Vīranārāyaṇa as the deity, facing east and consisting of the garbhagṛha, antarāla, gūḍhamaṇḍapa and the sabhamaṇḍapa or the raṅgamaṇḍapa. The second section has the southern shrine of Venugōpāla facing north and the northern shrine of Yōga Narasimha facing south with each of the shrines consisting of the garbhagṛha, antarāla and a large raṅgamaṇḍapa which is shared by both the shrines. These two sections are connected by a columnar and laterally open vestibule, a part of which is mutilated on the left. The first section is considered to be constructed initially and then the second section was added to it. This can be proved by the lesser height of the raṅgamaṇḍapa shared by the two shrines in the east and the unusual way the two raṅgamaṇḍapas have been connected through a pillared vestibule (Dhaky 1996: 363).

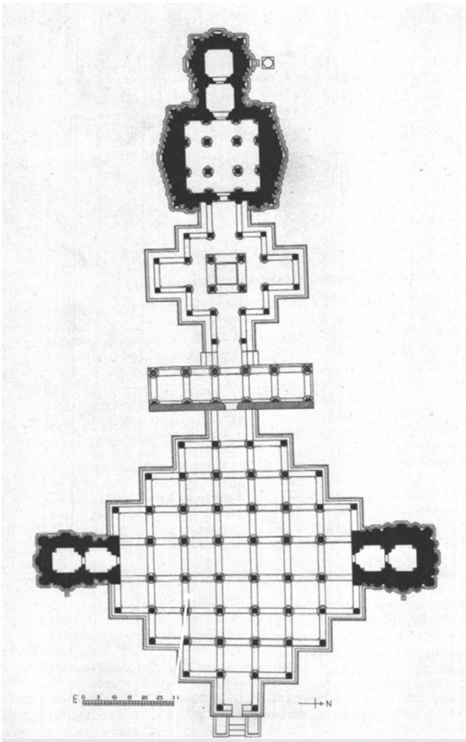
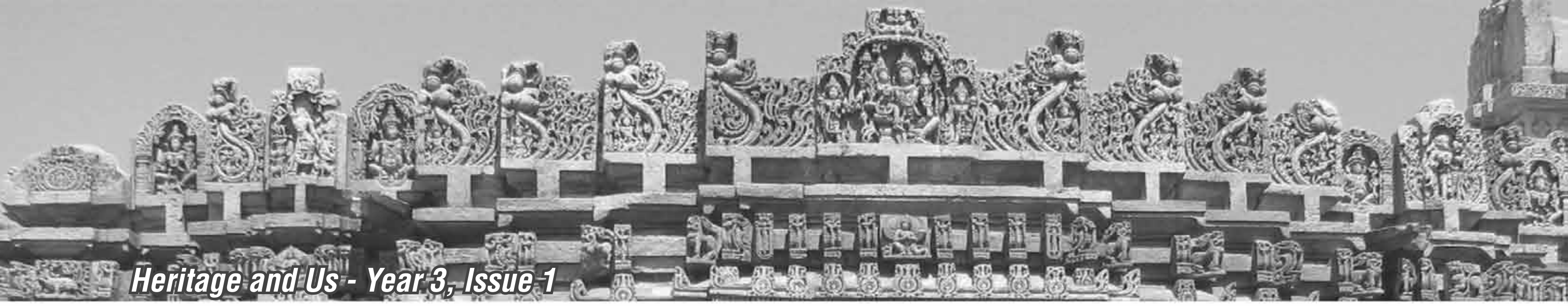


fig. 15 Ground plan (after Dhaky, 1996): Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi

The whole temple complex has a length which exceeds 65 m and a width of more than 35 m (Foekema 1994: 109). At about a distance of 15 m (Foekema 1994: 109), to the east of the temple complex there is a dvāramaṇḍapa (fig. 16). It is a large structure with walls on the south and north; and the walls on the



fig. 16 Dvāramaṇḍapa: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/Shivakanth Rao, 2012)



east and west have two doorways or dvāra to enter the temple whose stairways are guarded by two elephant figures on each side of the maṇḍapa. Originally, there was a prākāra wall surrounding the Vīranārāyaṇa main temple structure, perhaps with the mālikā-cloister, as also the uttānapaṭṭa or paved courtyard (Dhaky 1996: 361). The whole temple complex is east facing with a dhvajasthamba (fig. 17) in front of the entrance to the east and at a distance from the dvāramaṇḍapa. Another interesting feature of this temple is the Lathe-turned pillars (fig. 18). This temple is of Karṇāṭa Drāvida style of architecture.



fig. 17 Dhvajasthamba: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)



fig. 18 Lathe-turned pillars: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)

Lord Vīranārāyaṇa is placed in the western vimāna, facing east. It is triratha square in plan and measures about 4.57 m, an average size (Foekema 1994:109). The garbhagṛha of this shrine is square in plan and is a very dark room without any niches. There are two pointed star shaped pilasters behind, on either sides of the deity in the garbhagṛha. Lord Vīranārāyaṇa is standing on high

Garuda pīṭha. There are no sculptural decorations inside the garbhagṛha, except for the samatala vitāna (fig. 19). The garbhagṛha has a dvāra with one śākhā, stambhaśākhā, with Jaya on the right and Vijaya on the left of the pēdyā portion. The uttarāṅga has phāṃsanā miniature śīkhara with two rekhā nāgara miniature śīkhara on the either sides of it with padma nidhis appearing at intervals. The lalāṭabimba of this dvāra has the image of Gajalakṣmī on it. There is a praṇāla on the north side of this vimāna (fig. 20).


fig. 19 Samatala Vitāna: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)

This shrine is tritala in elevation and has an undecorated kapōtabandha adhiṣṭhāna. The jaṅghā of this vimāna does not have any decorations other than the projected and staggered bhadra and karna which show shafts and padma motif relieving the subhadra face. This vimāna is topped by a giant vedikā and Kūṭa roof (Foekema 1994: 109) which is crowned by a kalaśa. This superstructure is covered by the usual smithy like Hoysaḷanādu ornamentation though the kūṭas' shoulders are without carving and the kūṭas of the uppermost floor have been left undecorated (Dhaky 1996: 361). It also has a śukanāsī with dvitala in elevation on the top and is decorated by images.


fig. 20 Vīranārāyaṇa Shrine: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)

Lord Vēṇugōpāla (fig. 21) is placed in the southern vimāna, facing north. It is triratha square or orthogonal in plan and measures about 4.9 m (Foekema 1994: 109). The garbhagṛha of this shrine is very dark and is square in plan, decorated with two pointed star shaped pilasters on either sides of the deity. It is also decorated with the samatala vitāna. Lord Vēṇugōpāla is of about 2.13 m high (M.A.A.R 1933: 88) and is standing on the high Garuda pīṭha The decorations on the dvāra, pēdyā, uttarāṅga and the lalāṭabimba portions of this shrine are similar to the Vīranārāyaṇa shrine (fig. 22).

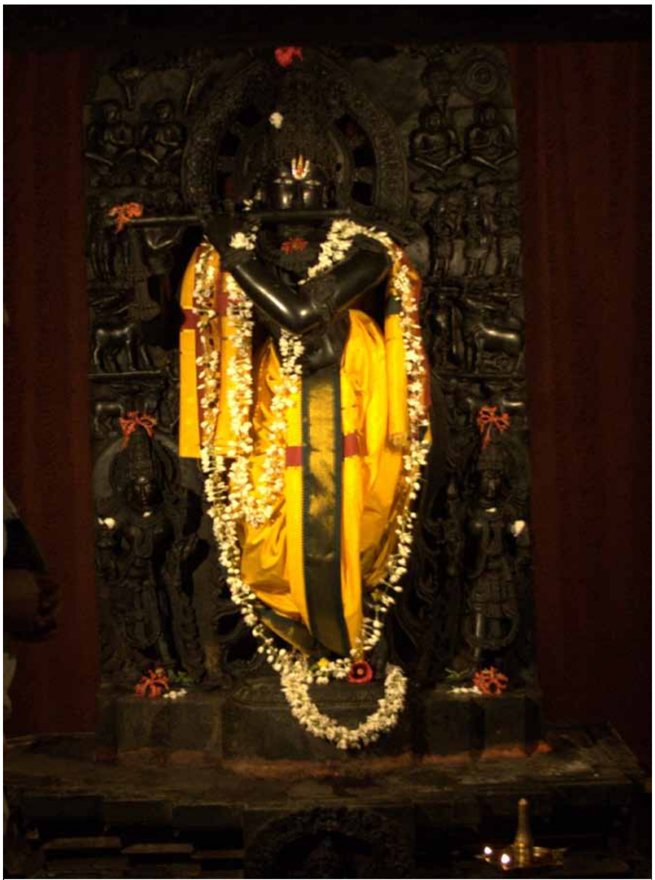

fig. 21 Vēṇugōpāla in the Garbhagṛha: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)


fig. 22 Vēṇugōpāla Shrine: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/Shivakanth Rao, 2012)

This shrine is tritala in elevation and has an undecorated kapōtabandha adhiṣṭhāna. The jaṅghā of this vimāna is decorated with various sculptures divided by the devakoṣṭhas and the ornate pilasters depicting Viṣṇu's incarnations. This vimāna is topped by a giant vedikā and kūṭa roof which is crowned by a kalaśa. The carved decoration of the superstructure is notable for its minute jewellery-like detail (Dhaky 1996: 363). It has a śukanāsī with dvitala in elevation and square in plan which is decorated by images.

Lord Yōganarasimha (fig. 23) is placed in the northern vimāna, facing south. It is a tritala half star in plan and measures about 4.7 m, has more vertical sections and is much more crowded (Foekema 1994: 109). The garbhagṛha of this shrine has the same plan and decoration as the other two shrines, except for the nabhichhanda vitāna (fig. 24) which is present only in this shrine. Lord Yōganarasimha is about 1.98 m high (M.A.A.R. 1933: 88) and is standing on the high Garuda pīṭha. The decoration on the dvāra of this shrine is similar to the other two shrines and not many changes are found on it (fig. 25).

This shrine is catuṣtala in elevation but the proportional upper floors'

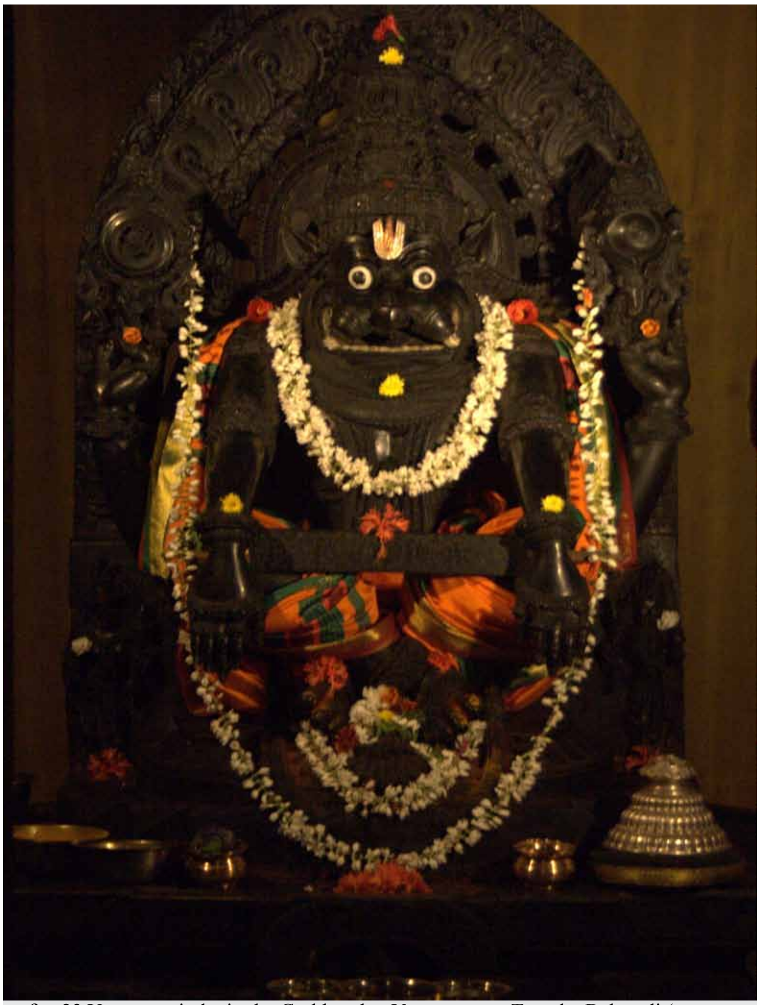


fig. 23 Yōganarasimha in the Garbhagṛha: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)



fig. 24 Nābhichanda Vitāna: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)



fig. 25 Yōganarasimha Shrine: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi (source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)

separation and gradation in the superstructure are not right; the superstructure as a result, looks a little clumsy even though it is intricately carved (Dhaky 1996: 363). It has an undecorated kapōtabandha adhiṣṭhāna. The basal configuration of the vimāna is remarkable for its prominently projected bhadra, the upabhadras ending with a stellate pallavī on either side which as pratiratha, bears an angled wall pilaster (Dhaky 1996: 363). The jaṅghā of this vimāna is decorated with various sculptures divided by devakoṣṭhas and ornate pilasters depicting Vaiṣṇava images. This vimāna is topped by a giant vedikā and kūṭa roof which is crowned by a kalaśa. It has a śukanāsī with tritala in elevation and is stellate in plan which is decorated by images.

The Vīranārāyaṇa temple is dedicated to the Vaiṣṇava sect, so all the iconographic representations are of Viṣṇu. There are 24 forms of Viṣṇu in total, out of which eighteen forms are found on this temple. They are; Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Gōvinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdan, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Śrīdhara, Dāmōdara, Vāsudēva, Pradyumna, Puruṣōttama, Narasimha, Janārdana, Upendra, Hari and Kṛṣṇa. Out of the ten Avatāras of Viṣṇu, eight Avatāras are found in this temple. They are; Varāha, Narasimha which has three iconographic representations-Yōganarasimha, Lakṣmī-Narasimha and Vidārana Narasimha; Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa which has four iconographic representations - Nṛtya Kṛṣṇa, Vēṇugōpāla, Kāliyādamana and Govardhandhāri Kṛṣṇa; Balarāma and Buddha. There are many other manifestations of Viṣṇu found in this temple. They are; Harihara, Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa, Yōga Nārāyaṇa, Vīranārāyaṇa, Śāraṅgapāṇi Viṣṇu, Mohinī and Dhanvantari. The images of the female deities associated with this sect like Lakṣmī, Vaiṣṇavi, Gajalakṣmī, Śrīdevī, Bhūdevī, Pārvatī, Saraswatī, Indrānī, Vārunī, Revatī, Rohinī and Ratī are found in this temple. There are also images of other deities associated with this sect like Indra, Arjuna, Kāmadeva, Hanumāna, Garuḍa, Jaya, Vijaya, Padmanidhi, consort of Padmanidhi and Śaṅkhanidhi. There are representations of secular images like, surasundaris, warriors, dancing figures and panels, semi-divine figures, mythical animals and musicians. There are representations of the panels from the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata.

This temple is decorated with images on most of its parts and is highly ornate. The images are found in the jaṅghā, śikhara and the chādya of the maṇḍapas. The epic panels are represented on the outer wall of the kakśāsana and some on the jaṅghā, śikhara

and the chādya of the maṇḍapas and the vitānas. There are images on the southern and northern jaṅghā but the western jaṅghā is devoid of images. All the three śikharas are richly decorated with images on all its talas and sides. There are images on the lalāṭabimba and the pēdyā portion of the dvāraśākhā (fig. 26).


fig. 26 Dvāraśākhā: Vīranārāyaṇa Temple, Belavadi
(source: ASI/ Shivakanth Rao, 2012)

This temple is one of the finest monuments of the Hoysaḷa period. The jaṅghā and the śikharas of this trikūṭa temple are exquisitely embellished with sculptures of the deities, which are dominated by Vaiṣṇava faith. Besides the religious icons, the temple is also embellished by secular images, animal figures, floral motifs and geometrical designs. The vitānas of the temple are gracefully ornate, which is one of the notable features of the shrine. The fusion of architecture and sculptural art is seen in this temple. The temple shows two distinct phase of the architectural activity. In the first phase, the central shrine and the raṅgamaṇḍapa in the front of it were constructed, which are considerably plain. The northern and southern shrines are comparatively ornate and developed, which witnessed the second phase of the architectural activity. This temple stands majestically at Belavadi, preserving glorious traditions and history of the Hoysaḷa dynasty.

Conclusions

The Vīranārāyaṇa temple is a fine specimen of Hoysaḷa architecture and is perhaps the biggest in size among the Trikūṭacala temples in Karnataka. It is in fact much more

complex than any other known Trikūṭacala temples of the Hoysaḷa dynasty. Its detail study suggests that it should be studied in two parts; the western and the eastern parts. This temple seems to have been built during the rule of the Hoysaḷa king, Vīra Ballāla II in 1206 CE. Since the main inscription is too damaged, the name of the founder and the foundation date has been lost. The inscribed slab must, however, have been set up when all the shrines had been already built, because at its crest, it shows Nārāyaṇa flanked by Narasimha and Vēṇugōpāla. A second damaged donative inscription dated 1206 CE mentions the Nārāyaṇa temple and not the other two temples. Therefore, it is likely that the first temple had been built in or a few years before 1206 CE during the rule of Vīra Ballāla II; the other two were added, but seemingly not long after 1206 CE. (Dhaky 1996: 363).

The style and architecture of the temple, however enables to decide the date of the temple approximately. The period between 11th and 13th centuries was the period of the greatest building activity in this country and the conversion to Vaiṣṇavism from Jainism of the Hoysaḷa king, Biṭṭi Deva (afterwards called Viṣṇuvardhana) about the year 1116 CE may be said to mark the beginning of this building activity. During the two centuries that succeeded this memorable event, temples dedicated to Viṣṇu and Śiva began to spring up with great rapidity throughout the country and it is this extraordinary religious zeal that soon brought into existence a new style of architecture (M.A.A.R. 1923: 4).

The Vīranārāyaṇa temple is one of the most significant monuments built from the point of view of the socio-religious and cultural scenario that existed during the rule of the Hoysaḷa dynasty. It incorporates all the religious, architectural and iconographical terms and norms that existed and were essential in that period, making it one of the most ornately, minutely and beautifully carved temples of the Hoysaḷa dynasty.

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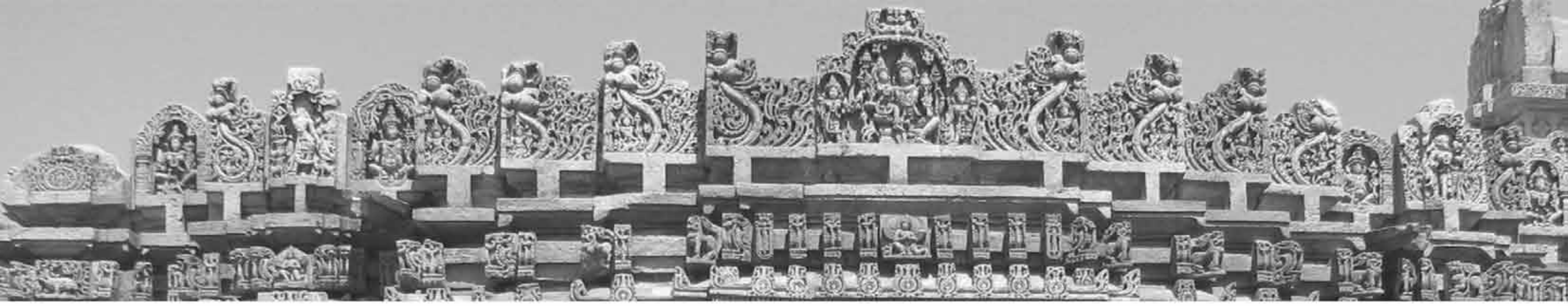
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About the author

* ritu.bhowmik20@gmail.com

Ms. Priyanka Bhowmik is an independent researcher. She did her post-graduation in Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology from the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, Deemed University, Pune. Her areas of interest are archaeology and temple architecture.



Coins of Dakśiṇa Kosala: Art Perspective

Vishi Upadhyay*

Dakśina Kosala, roughly corresponding to the boundaries of present Chhattisgarh, which was carved out of erstwhile Madhya Pradesh in 2000, has a long numismatic history commencing from the Punch-marked coins. After the Janapada type or punch-marked variety, many coins of Mauryas, Sātavāhanas, Kuṣāṇas, Kṣtrapas and Guptas have been yielded from this area. Posterior to Guptas, when there was a considerable decline in the trade and commerce leading to a sparse retrieval of coinage, many local dynasties of Chhattisgarh issued a rich typology of coins viz. Maghas of Malhār (1st century BCE-3rd century CE), Nala (6th-7th century CE), Śarabhpuriyās (6th-7th century CE), Kalachurīs of Ratanpur (9th-12th century CE), Phaṇināgvaṁśīns (10th-14th century CE) and Nāgvaṁśīns of Chakrakota (4th-8th century CE). Most of the coins especially of Śarabhpuriya and Kalachuri dynasties have reflected the higher artistic merit.

These are found from stratigraphic context as well as from stray hoards, there are numerous varieties of coins with plethora of motifs viz. deities (Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu, Hanumāna), fauna (Lion elephant, Bull, parrot, eagle, peacock and swan), mythical animals (Gajaśārdula, Garuda) and a few mint marks. These coins were minted on three metals - gold, silver and copper, with higher and lower denominations. Apart from this, devices on Kalachuri coins present a riddle for Numismatists, who present dubious decipherment and wrong identifications. The figure on the reverse of these coins is indeed crudely executed which has caused such divergence of opinions among the scholars. The present paper entails an attempt to document the coinage of Dakśina Kosala with a focus on the study of art and iconography through the numismatic history of the region.

(A) Symbols

The coins of Dakśiṇa Kosala are noted for the rich variety of symbols punched on them. Many symbols are noticed on the local coins of this region i.e. eye or solid oval surrounded

by seven dots (fig. 27a-b), such symbol has been found on the silver punch-marked coins which were once circulated in this region (Kulkarni 1985-86: 40-45). In this respect few *Māṣaka* coins, reported from the Thatari (Akaltara) consist a variety of symbols (Gupta and Jain 1985: 107-114). Besides this, two silver punch-marked coins have been revealed from the Malhār (Majumdar 2000: 1-27) comprising Malhār symbol, sun, bull, elephant and four minute indistinct symbols.



fig. 27a-b Coin having an eye or solid oval surrounded by seven dots

Along with it, few un-inscribed copper cast coins which were local issues of Vidarbha region, collected by L.P. Pandey from the region of Balpur. These coins have symbols viz. hollow cross, *Nandīpāda*, tree in railing, *Jaydvaja*, etc.

Other symbols are noticed on un-inscribed die struck coins, existed in collection of Rohini Kumar Bajpai (Bhargava 1999:11-13). There are many symbols i.e. a dot in the centre with four crescents placed on the four sides (similar symbols have also been seen on the *Māṣaka* silver coins from Thathari), *svastika*, taurine and standard, etc.

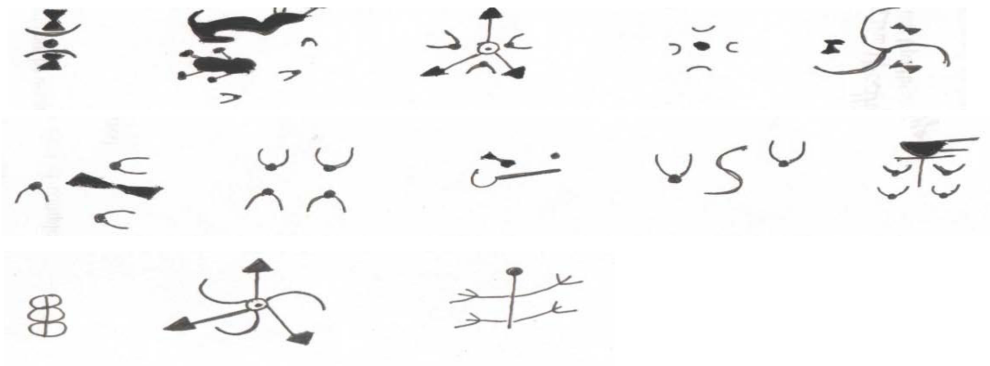
In 12th century CE, the punch-marked technique was re-used by the Chindaka Nagvamsins of Chakrakota and having nine symbols on flan i.e. figure of tiger, roaring, standing to right, facing left, forepaw raised from the ground; before him a dagger with its point resting on ground; above the animal sun and moon are represented on right and left respectively, *Shivalinga* and few letters in Telagu (Tripathy 1986:104-109).

Source of Symbols (table 1-2 as on pp. 36-37)

Few scholars have been served their views in this respect (Suresh 2011: 43-44). Punch-marked coins are the earliest coins in this part of the world and they have not been inspired by or modeled on the coins of any other region. In such circumstances, the earliest punch-marked makers would not have had any coin to serve as a model or

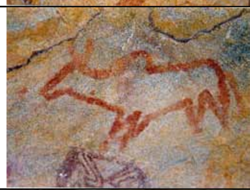
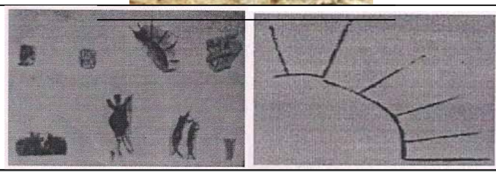
prototype for them. Then how exactly did they get the idea of stamping such a wide variety of symbols on their coins? It is possible that they simply copied the various living and non-living things around them on the coins. They would definitely have been inspired by different art objects of their period or an earlier one.

Table 1

Coin type	Symbols
Punch-marked	
Punch-marked	
Punch-marked *mashka* type	
Chindaka Nagvansins	

Other little observation is also appeared in this regard that is symbols on the punch-marked coins seem to have been derived from or at least inspired by early rock art in the form of pecking and paintings found in central and southern India. Although the exact date of some of these rock art specimens is debatable, it is certain that the majority of them pre-date the punch-marked. For instance, the symbol of the three-arched hill surmounted by a crescent appearing on the innumerable punch-marked are identical to the same symbol on the rock shelter at Bhimbetka in central India. Dr V.S. Vakarnkar has also supported this point.

Table 2

Name of the Site	Symbols	Image
Basanajhar	Elephant	
Udkuda	Bull	
Gotitola	Bull	
Kherkheda	Bull	
Singhapur	Sun	

Similarly, the arched hill symbols, the hollow cross, the Ujjain symbol and many other symbols seen on punch-marked are known from objects of Harappan period, especially potsherds.

So many sources of these symbols have been suggested by scholars, which may be accurate in this respect. If the symbols of local punch-marked coins of Dakṣiṇa Kosala are compared with the rock art of Chhattisgarh, it shows the similarities with few rock art symbols viz. the humped bull of silver punch-marked coin resembles the humped bull of Oṅgnā (rock art site in Chhattisgarh), besides, *savastika*, sun, elephant, taurine are noticed from the many rock art sites of Chhattisgarh i.e. Udkuda, Gotitola, Adwa Pahad, kerkeda, Singhanpur (Aderson 1918: 298-306), etc. All these sites ascribe the date of Mesolithic to Historical period.

(B) Flora and Fauna Motifs

Pīple

Floral motifs are not found in so much variety on the local coins of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. One copper cast coin of Vidarbha region was collected by L.P. Pandey from the Balpur, there is *pīple* tree in railing. Apart from this, the coins of Bhāliga, Achaḍsiri and Maghasiri also contain same motif.

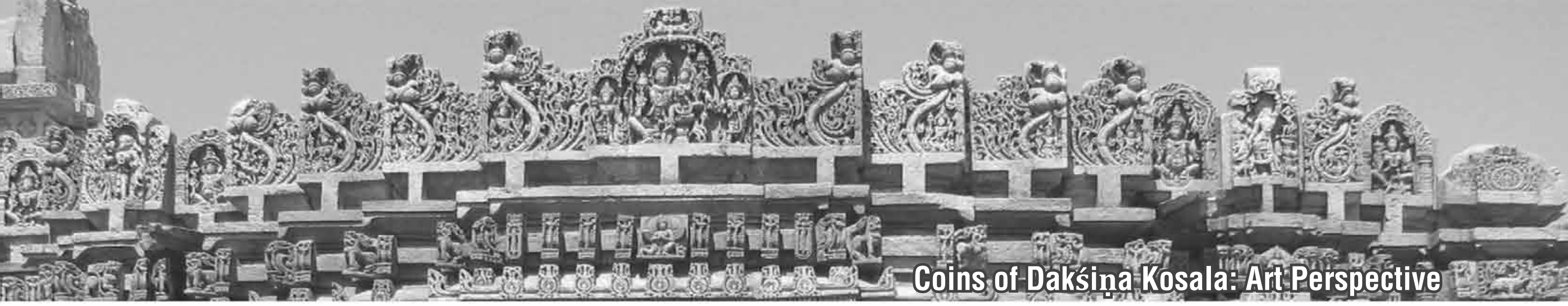
Lotus

Lotus is generally noticed on coins of Kalachurīs in Lakśmī type coins, full-bloomed lotus with long stalk is occupied the hand of goddess in reverse side. The petals are skillfully indicated by thin, tiny dots. Such kind of lotus is noticed on the copper coin of Pṛiṭhavīdeva II. On copper coin of Pṛiṭhavīdeva I, there is also the depiction of Lakśmī with half bloomed lotus with long stalk.

Elephant

Depiction of Elephant is common in ancient Indian coins. Representation of Elephant is noticed on the planchet of coins of Chhattisgarh from period of punch-marked coins (3rd century BCE - 4th century CE). Three silver punch-marked coins which are in possession of Bhanu Pratap Singh; there are two kinds of figures of Elephant appeared, first with tusk and uplifted trunk and second one with downwards trunk and braid of hair at the end of the tail have been chiseled. Right oriented figures of Elephant look unrealistic and crude.

When keep the eye towards the coins of Malhār, mostly coins consist the figure of Elephant. Few un-inscribed die struck copper coins reveal crude form of Elephant. Figure of elephant on the coins of early Magha rulers like Silālusiri, is quite crude and dumpy. The selection of the elephant is represented as the obverse device for the coins of Malhār which continued for at least five centuries (1st-4th century CE). It is possible that Elephant was chosen as the main motif because it had been used on many coins of ancient India or because Elephant formed an important part of the life of the people of Malhār (Majumdar 2000:15).



Some refinement in the delineation of the motifs on the coins of Malhār can be noticed in the coins of Achaḍasiri where the crude and dumpy elephant is replaced by a much realistic elephant.

This gradual developments reached its zenith during the reign of the Maghas especially Śiva Magha whose issues are the most innovative from the point of shapes as well as motifs. The obverse device on the coins of this ruler was the same i.e. Elephant.

Next rulers of Dakśiṇa Kosala who adorned their coins with the figures of Elephants, were Kalachurīs of South Kosala. Initial rulers viz. Pṛiṭhavīdeva I, Ratandeva I, Jājalladeva I and few later kings also used the motif of *Gajśārdual* (lion is attacking on elephant) on their coins but here elephant is depicted in linear form and looks crude. A later king of Ratanpur branch named as Pratāpmalladeva, he adopted a quite mature, lively and well executed figure of elephant on his copper coins (fig. 28a-b). Well built elephant is running with tusk and uplifted trunk. Minute details such as the folds on the skin of body and the braid of hair at the end of the tail have been skillfully chiseled. The tusk appears slender but is pointed and sometimes prominently bent upwards. The influence of art is also retrieved from the contemporary sculptural art. The mirror image of Elephant on coins of Kalachuris is found on sculpture of this period (fig. 29).



fig. 28a-b Representation of Elephant, coin of Pratapmalladeva



fig. 29 Elephant in sculpture, Kalachuris period

Bull

Depiction of bull on the coins of Dakṣiṇa Kosala is commenced from the punch-marked coins with crude representation. On obverse side of coin, there are two yoked bulls and a humped bull is standing individually. Such yoked bulls are also noticed on early potsherd of Malwa ware, period II, T.99 from Ināmgaon excavation (Dhavalikar 1988: 379). Another bull in same coin does not reflect any artistic value. There is a dot appeared in front of his neck and his square shaped face, unrealistic body reflects the dumpiness of this figure. Silver punch-marked coin which is revealed from Malhār (Bhargava 1995: 13-14) also consist the figure of humped bull. This figure is comparatively developed from previously mentioned bull figure (fig. 30).

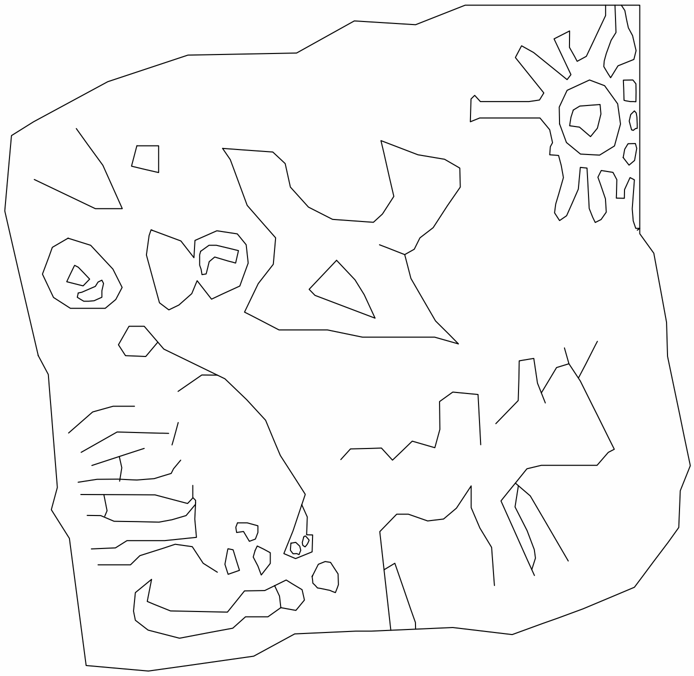


fig. 30 Bull motif on silver punched-mark coin: Malhar

Coins of Nala dynasty come next, in the same series (fig. 31a-b). But here the figure of bull is quite mature and well executed. All coins of this dynasty are found styled by a single humped bull, seating on a pedestal and facing right or left. Figure of bull looks royal and lively under a beaded border. Rounded horns and stout or bulky body of animal present beautiful portrayed. In this regard, the coin of Nandrāja is too artistic, there is a couchant bull contained the depiction of crescent in front the face of bull and four parallel dots are arranged in artistic manner over the slender body of bull. In another coin of Staṁbha, there is crescent replaced by

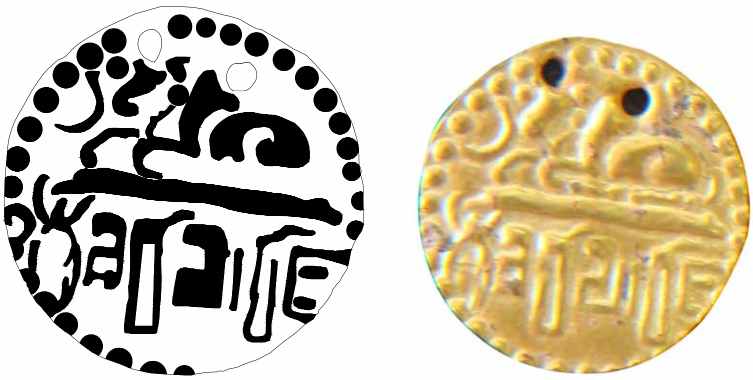


fig. 31a-b Coins, Nala dynasty

the full circular moon. All these figures are ornate by a beautiful necklace around the neck. Bull (*Nandi*) on coins of Nala is shown the ascetic sense.

Depiction of bull is a favorite topic for artisans and they applied it also on sculptures and seals. Seals of Pāṅḍuvamśins king Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna are also adorned with the figure of seated bull (fig. 32). Many sculptures of Pāṅḍuvamśins and Kalachuri period are represented the form of bull (fig. 33).



fig. 32 Seal, Pāṅḍuvamśins king Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna



fig. 33 Bull, Kalachuri period

Peacock

Peacock is the symbol of beauty and this beautiful bird for the first time is reported from the coin of Śivamagha of Magha dynasty of Malhār in context of Dakśiṇa Kosala (Majumdar 2000: 15-16). Here peacock is shown in different postures viz. dancing, perched on a pedestal with plumage unfurled, etc. Depiction of dancing peacock shows highly skilled workmanship and portrays mobility (fig. 34a-b).



fig. 34a-b Dancing peacock on coins, Sivamagha, Magha dynasty

Eagle

Coins of Phaṇināgvaṁśīns consist figure of eagle. Eagle has been represented here in full bird form it is not influenced by mythical Garuḍa of Prasannamāta, Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya. On coin of Kakkaḍadeva, there is a figure of eagle with spreading wings (fig. 35a-b), but it is too dumpy and crude (Yadava 2007-09: 45-46).

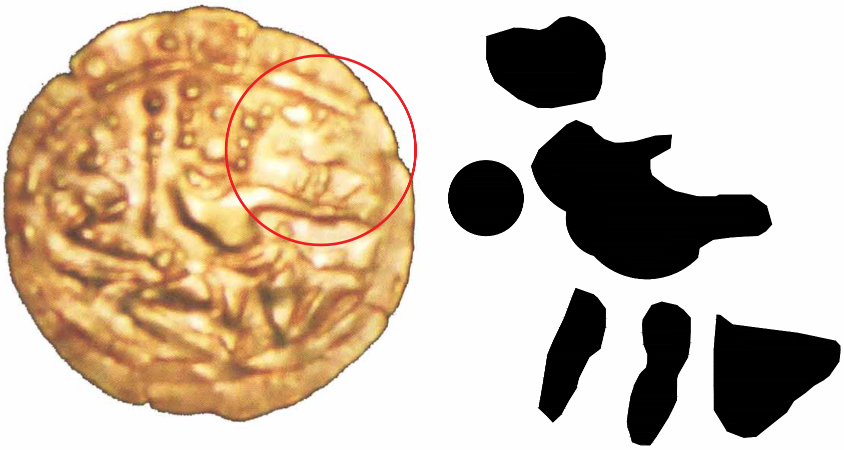


fig. 35a-b Eagle, coin of Kakkaḍadeva

Parrot

This bird only appears on copper coin of Pŗiṭhavīdeva I. There is a figure of dancing goddess most probably Lakśmī because she is held lotus and chakra, however the figure of dancing Lakśmī is very rare but on its left an effigy of parrot is appeared by scratching his body (fig. 36a-b). Same kind of depiction is also seen on the door jamb of Harṣvardhan vihār of Sirpur (fig. 37). But here, parrot is eating fruits.



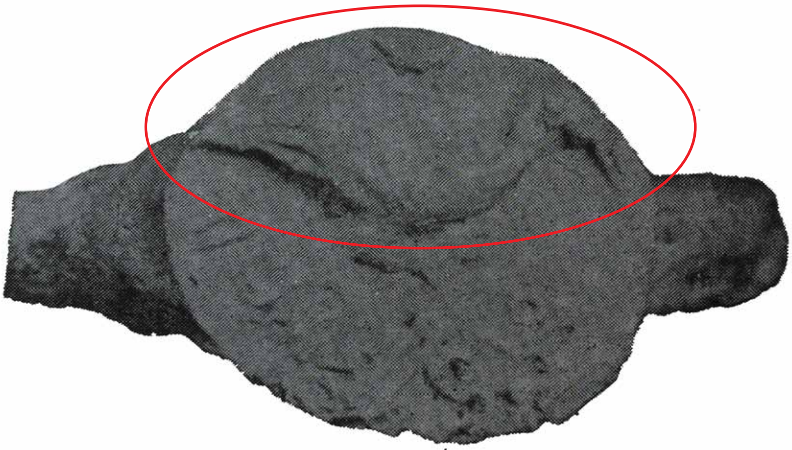
fig. 36a-b Parrot on a coin



fig. 37 Depiction of Parrot on door jamb: Harṣvardhan vihār, Sirpur

Swan

Swan is noticed from few un-inscribed die stuck coins from Malhār. Here swan is depicted in two from - 1) individually and; 2) with standing goddess by offering something (Bhargava 1995:13-14). Swan is also shown on the seal of Rāṇaka ṣrī (fig. 38a-b) (Jain 2005: 66).



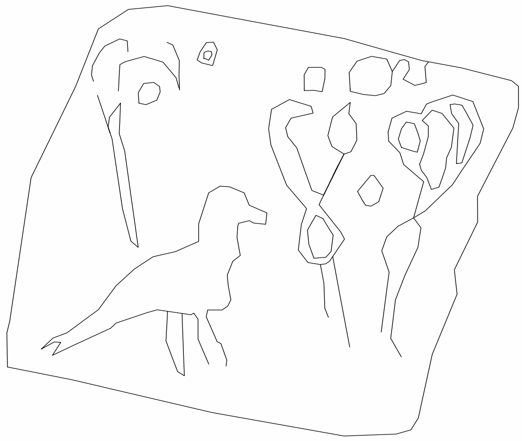


fig. 38a-b Swan, seal of Ranaksri (left); and Swan on a coin of Malhar (right)

Lion

Individual figure of lion is first reported from the coins of Chindaka Nagvansins of Chakrakota (fig. 39). Centre of flan consist a figure of lion with calf. Inscriptions of Chindakas rulers are indicated that lion was the royal emblem of them.



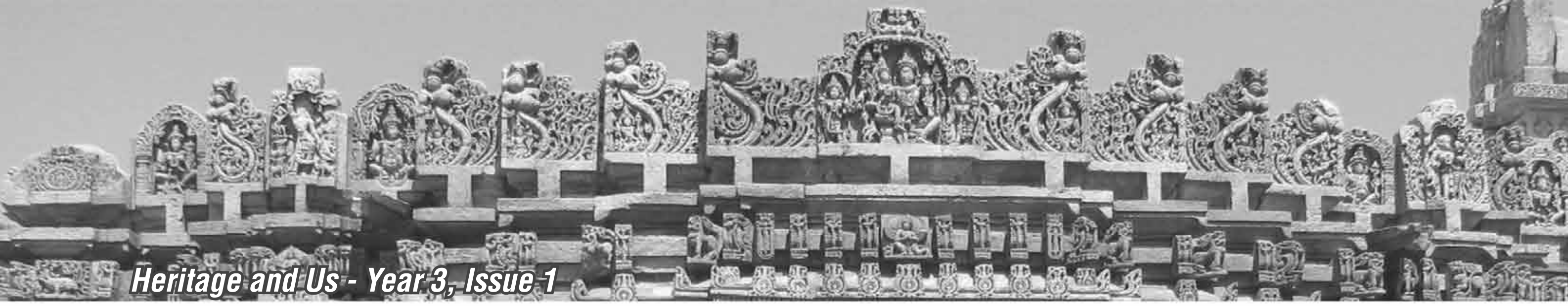
fig. 39 Lion, coin of Chindaka Nagvansins of Chakrakota

(C) Mythical Motifs

Gajśārdual

Representation of *Gajśārdual* is favorite reverse device for most of the Kalachuri rulers of Ratanpur viz. Ratandeva I and II, Pŗiṭhavīdeva I, Jājajalladeva I and II and Pratāpmalladeva. This was also the royal emblem of Kalchuris.

The *Gajśārdual* is a mythical animal and generally noticed on the outer walls of temples. This is composite form of lion and elephant. On the gold and copper coins of Kalachurīs



of Ratanpur, there is depiction of rampant lion on elephant (*Gajśārdual*). The figure of lion has been drawn in linear form. The meaning of the representation of *Gajśārdula* is also cleared by the inscriptions and sculptures of Kalachurīs. The Kalachurī kings styled themselves as powerful as lion and elephant representing the groups of enemies (Mirashi 1955: 398). This was the symbol of their victory on enemies. This kind of art is also found on the sculptures of Kalachurī period (fig. 40a-b).





fig. 40a-b Depiction of Gajshardual, Kalachuri Period

Apart from it, Pratāpmalladeva, king of same dynasty, used the figure of lion on his coins. Before this king, image of lion was only in symbolic form or in liner form. Coins of Pratāpmalladeva have well executed figure of lion. On coins of Pratāpmalladeva a developed form of *Gajśārdual* can be noticed. There is lion in aggressive position, his body is too muscular and two front legs are rising up and attacking to an animal, his tail is upward and this portrayed is really lively and beautiful (fig. 41a-b).



fig. 41a-b Gajśārdual, coins of Pratāpmalladeva

The *Gajśārdual* form is also noticed on the sculptures of this period and this is noteworthy that the form of *Gajśārdual* was following by sculptures and coins simultaneously.

Garuḍa (mythical mount of Viṣṇu)

Depiction of *Garuḍa* (composite form of human and eagle) was the common symbol for all *Vaiṣṇava* kings. In Dakṣiṇa Kosala, depiction of *Garuḍa* finds on coins of Prasannamātra Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya (Nath 1952-53: 36).



fig. 42 Garuda, coin of Prasannāmatra

Coins of Prasannāmatra (fig. 42) are presented in well executed figure of *Garuḍa*. Inside the circle of dots along with edge, coin is divided into two parts by a horizontal line. On the upper half, an effigy of *Garuḍa* is engraved. He is standing on horizontal line with wings, designed with lines and dots spread out. Lower portion of coin, consists the legend (Name of king). *Garuḍa* on coins of these three kings is consisted different artistic merits. Somatic features of *Garuḍa* are quite common, his body is combination of human and bird, face is represented by human and lower body shows the anatomy of bird. These somatic features are similar in coins of all three kings. Coiffure of *Garuḍa* of Coin Prassanamātra is different from Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya. Coiffure is shown in the form of bun and placed on both, side corners of the head. It gives an attractive impression to the figure but no hairdo decoration is shown on coins of Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya, only in one coin of Mahendrāditya, *Garuḍa* is represented with the turban. Wings of *Garuḍa* on coin Prassanamātra are much artistic than the other one, apart from this, the crescent, the sun, chakra, *śaṅkha* and offerings (shown by dots on the bottom of the legs of the Garuḍa) are increased the divinity of figure. These sacred objects are depicted all these coins but these have been much skillfully carved on the coins of Prassanamātra. Besides, Garuḍa wears a *hāra* on neck covering the full body under an oval circle, representation of this *hāra* is only shown on the coins of Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya and gives the divinity to this figure (fig.43 a, b and c).

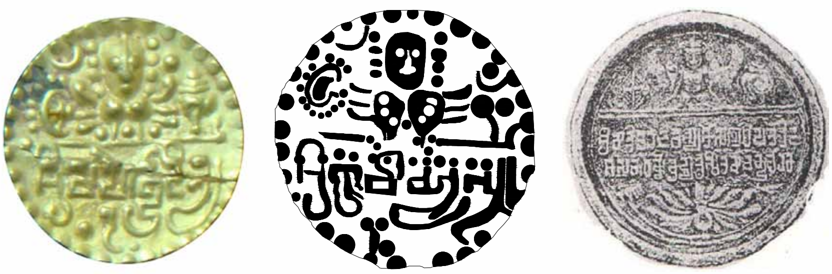


fig. 43a, b and c Garuda wearing hara, coin of Mahendraditya and Kramaditya (left and centre); and seal of Tiverdeva (right)

Approximately all coins of Prassanamātra are good instance of art but fine and crude both varieties have been noticed on coins of Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya.

Figure of Garuḍa is also reported from the seals of Tiverdeva (Pānḍuvaṁśīns) and Buddhist monasteries at Sirpur (fig. 44). Here the seal of Tiverdeva is much influenced by the coins of Prasannamatra.



fig. 44 Garuḍa: Sirpur

(D) Deities

Hanumān

Through the archaeological evidences, the antiquity of Hanumān goes back to 7th-8th century CE in Dakśiṇa Kosala. At Malhār, there is temple of Pānḍuvaṁśīns period (7th-8th century CE) spelled as Bhīmkīchak. The periphery of this temple consists many panels belong to stories of Ramayana; in various places these panels are represented the image of Hanumān. According to scholars, the figure of Hanumān is firstly noticed on the copper coins of Pṛiṭhavīdeva I in context of Dakṣiṇa Kosala (fig. 45a-b). P.C. Roy described six verities of Hanumān i.e. Flying Hanumān, two handed Hanumān, *triśuladhāri* Hanumān, standing Hanumān, sitting Hanumān by trampling the demon and Dhvajadhari Hanumān (Roy 1985: 40-51). After analysing these types of five copper coins, the author did not agree with the categorisation. Standing Hanumān as described by Roy, this kind of coin has studied by author in collection of Sandeep Pandey, Lochan Prasad Pandey and Pushparaj Victor.



fig. 45a-b Depiction of Hanumān, coins of Pṛiṭhavīdeva I

There is deity facing left or right, carried an indistinct attribute in left hand and chakra in right hand, a *kunḍala* in right or left ear is clearly visible. His right leg is lifting up for crushing the demon. Other somatic features like nose and lips are clearly seen here which is not seem like monkey but an uplifted tail in left corner reflects the image of

monkey god. So this figure may be denoting to the Hanumān. Similar coin has been noticed by me in collection of Pushparaja Victor, there is such kind of deity wears a crown with three parallel triangular projections on the top of the crown. A coin of Jājalldeva II has two handed deity (fig. 46a-b) which has been analysed by the author. His somatic features and attributes are different from the previously mentioned deity. Here the face of deity appears like monkey and is holding a standard in left hand and his tail is sticking as creeper with the standard. On the bottom may be the figure of demon is lying on, so it should be two handed Hanumān. The next coin which has been described by Roy as *triśuladhāri* Hanumān with figure of bird, this is not convinced to me. There is an image of goddess in *tribhaṅga* posture and is held a lotus with stalk in right hand. A figure of bird (probably parrot) is shown in proper left of goddess. There is another coin of Jājalladeva II in collection of Bhanupratap singh, consisted the image of two handed Hanumān. It seems actual depiction of Hanumān and the category of flying Hanumān can be matched with it. Another supporting point in this regard, is a stone sculpture of Hanumān which is stored in the periphery of Patāleśvar temple at Malhār and this temple is also belonged to the period of Jājalladeva II. Other categories of Roy are not suitable for such kind of coins.



fig. 46a-b Two handed deity, coin of Jājalldeva II

Lakśmī



fig. 47a, b and c Depiction of Lakshmi on seal (left and centre) and sculpture (right)

Generally the figure of Lakśmī is noticed with four arms engaging with lotus flowers. Either she is represented in Gajlakśmī form (*Abhiṣekha* performing by two elephants) in seated or standing position or on form of Lakśmī, without elephants. Lotus is the favorite attribute of the goddess; she holds it in her hands and stands on a lotus pedestal. Different seals and sealing and sculptures belong to local ruling dynasties of Dakśiṇa Kosala having the depiction of image of Lakśmī (fig. 47 a, b and c). The image of Gajalakśmī is quite common in this regard.

Flans of coins were first introduced by appearance of Lakśmī in period of Kalachurī of Ratanpur in Dakśiṇa Kosala, however on few local uninscribed copper coins of Dakśiṇa Kosala contain the crude figure of female figure or goddess but it does not reflect the clear appearance of Lakśmī. Most of the contemporary dynasties of Kalachuris viz. Chauhāns, Gahaḍwāl, Chandela, Kalachurī of Tripuri used the portrait of Gajalakśmī but coins of Kalachurī of Ratanpur invented few new forms of Lakśmī. The copper coins of Pṛiṭhavīdeva I should be counted first in this respect. Reverse devices of copper coins of Pṛiṭhavīdeva I are yielding a few new forms of Lakśmī. A single coin has been studied by the author from the collection of L.P. Pandey (fig. 48a-b). This coin was identified by P.C. Roy as the *triśuldhāri* Hanumān which is not correct because somatic appearance looks like a female, few scholars have supported this view.



fig. 48a-b Depiction of Lakshmi, coin of Pṛiṭhavīdeva I

Apart from this, left facing, two handed goddess is in standing position with stylistically uplifted leg. Her left hand is engaged with half bloomed lotus and right hand is seen carrying a *pāśa* like attribute. She is adorned with circular ear ring and her coiffure is in single bun like shape (*juḍā*). Besides, on the left of goddess, there is depiction of parrot by scratching the body through his beak. Posture of goddess seems to be *tribhṅga*. Navel of the centre of abdomen portion is postulated to being a female deity. On copper coins of Pṛiṭhavīdeva II, there is depiction of goddess Lakśmī with four arms. Attributes of upper and lower right hand are not much clear. A circular object is visible in upper right hand (probably *chakra*) and *pāsh* like object is shown in lower right hand. She is carrying a full bloomed lotus with long stalk in her left hand; lower left hand does not appear. Goddess is seated in *uṭkutāsana* and is adorned with circular *kunḍala* with a heavy coiffure with matted hairs. Navel of the centre of abdomen portion is increased the charm of the body. In proper left of this goddess, there is a trunk of elephant appeared, so it

must be the image of Gajalakśmī. On another copper coin of same ruler have the image of Gajalakśmī. There are two armed goddess seats in *uṭkuṭāsana*. Her right hand is resting on her right knee and a lotus with long stalk is held by goddess in her left hand. Left facing goddess wears a beautiful hairdo in shape of single bun (*juḍa*) and *Kanṭi* on neck (fig. 49). In proper left of this figure, there is a trunk of elephant appeared, so this must be the image of Gajalakśmī as previously described image.

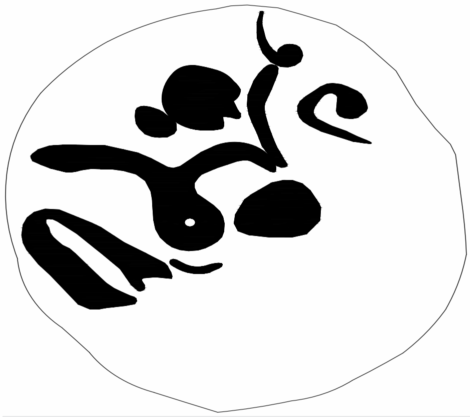


fig. 49 Goddess with a bun and Kanṭi on neck

A gold coin of Pratāpmalladeva is also having the image of two handed Lakśmī. She is represented in *uṭkuṭāsana* and carried a standard or lotus on right hand and *chakra* on left hand. Her coiffure is shown by three vertical lines and navel on the centre of abdomen is shown its female appearance. Later coins are illustrated by crude figures of Lakśmī. Few silver coins of Pṛiṭhvīdeva II and Ratandeva III have been analyzed by author. In silver coin of Pṛiṭhvīdeva II, the figure of goddess is represented by solid dots and silver coins of Ratandeva III contain the figure of Lakśmī in linear form (fig. 50). A feudatory king of Kalachuris named as Jagpāla, he also issued the coins of Lakśmī type (fig. 51a-b). The image of Lakśmī is having the likeness of coin of Gāṅgeyadeva but crudeness of depiction is decreased to its beauty.

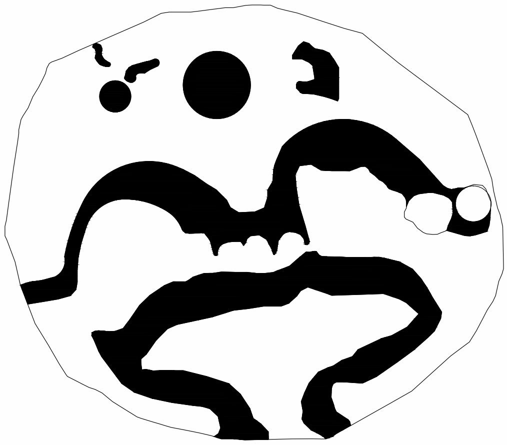


fig. 50 Lakśmī in linear form, coin of Ratandeva III

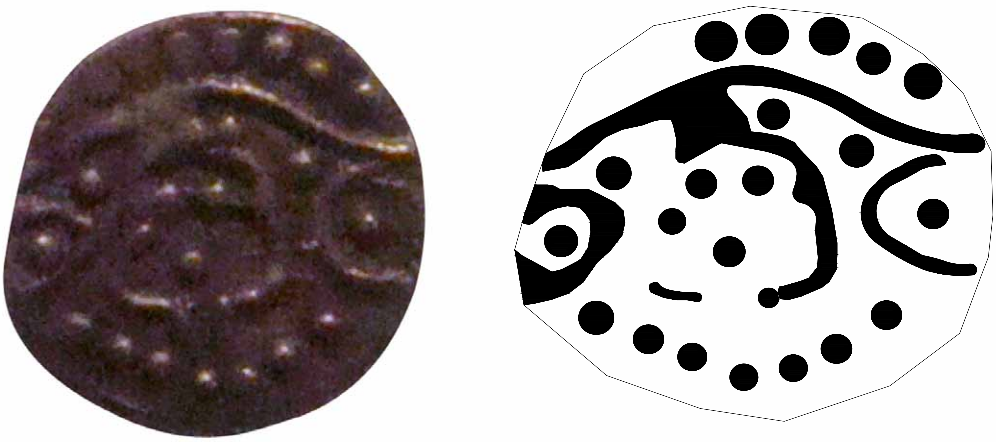


fig. 51a-b Coin of Japala, Lakshmi type

(E) Other Art Works (fig. 52a-d)

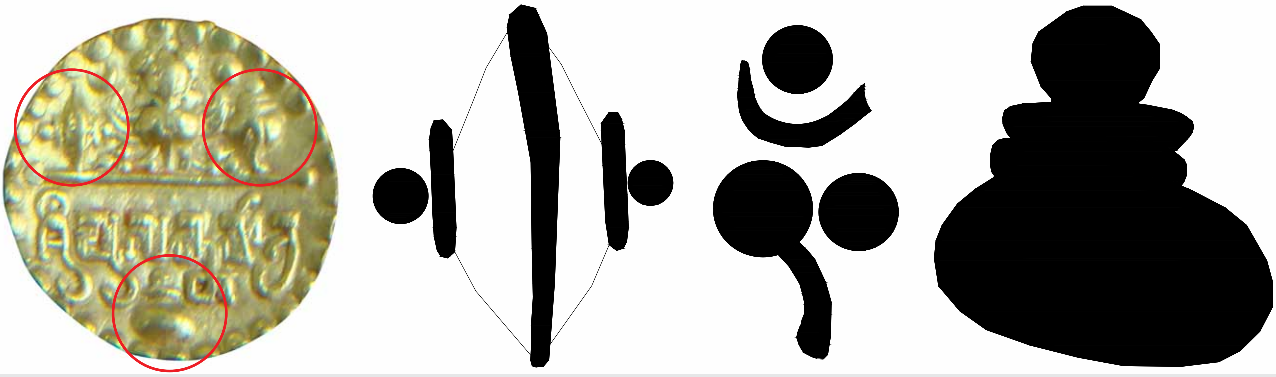


fig. 52a, b, c and d Other art motifs on coins

Sacred Objects

Conch or *śaṅkha* - *Śaṅkha*, is a conch shell which is of ritual and religious importance in both Brāhmanism and Buddhism.

Conch is noticed on so called coins Mahendrāditya, Kramāditya and Prasannamātra. On the proper left of Garuḍa, there is depiction of conch. On coins of Mahendrāditya it is found in left or right of Garuḍa. Generally conch or *śaṅkha* is favorite attribute of Viṣṇu and Garuḍa is also the mythical mount, so for showing the divinity of deity, conch is represented here. The conch of coin of Prasannamātra is much fine and beautiful than coins of Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya. Apart from this one fraction of coin of Prasannamātra is having the portrait of single conch.

Wheel - Wheel or *chakra* is also a attribute of Viṣṇu and also noticed on the coins of Mahendrāditya, Kramāditya and Prasannamātra. Wheel, on the coins of Prasannamātra is different and much fine than coins of Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya and quite similar to wheel of chariot. Similar kind of terracotta wheel also has been yielded from the site of Tālā (Nigam 1981: 49-53). Another fraction of coin of Prasannamātra reveals the single image of wheel on flan of coin with legend beneath. Wheel on the coin of Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya is different from the Prasannamātra. There is oval surrounded by ten or eleven tiny dots formed the figure of wheel. Another coin of Mahendrāditya consist a different shape of wheel. In this form, wheel with seven spokes, is represented by its side view and edge is decorated with tiny beads.

Kalaśa - *Kalaśa* is also represented in art of Dakśiṇa Kosala as well as coins. Coins of Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra are consisted the *Kalaśa* on beneath. Depiction of *Kalaśa* on coins of Mahendrāditya is crude. It is represented by a rounded body with long neck and coconut or knob of *Kalaśa* on the top while the *Kalaśa* on coins of Prasannamātra is consisted much rounded body than the Mahendrāditya, short neck and topped by a coconut on the top.

Universal Elements

Sun and Moon - Depiction of the Sun and the moon is quite common in Indian art and this is a very important part of Memorial stones, not a single memorial stone was carved without the sun and moon because these are the symbol of immortality. The depiction of the sun is noticed on coins of Mahendrāditya, Kramāditya and Prasannamātra, Nala and Chindaka Nagvamsins rulers. There is a circle shown the image of sun in proper left of figure of Garuda. Similarly the moon is also noticed on coins of Mahendrāditya, Kramāditya, Prasannamātra, Varāharāja, Arṭhapati, Nandrāja and Staṁbha, but there is moon depicted in crescent form except the coin of Staṁbha, there is full circular moon. On coins of Mahendrāditya, Kramāditya and Prasannamātra, it is represented on the right hand side of Garuda and on coins of Varāharāja, Arṭhapati, Naṅdarāja and Staṁbha, it is shown on front mouth of *Nandi*. On the coins of Chhindaka Nāgvaṁśīns of Chkrakoṭa, the sun and the moon are appeared over the head of lion on centre of flan.

Furniture

Couch or Pedestal - Such kind of furniture is noticed only on coins of Nala dynasty. There is Nandi seated on a pedestal, few scholar are identified it as couch. Pedestal of coin on Arṭhapati is two tired and decorated by two or three horizontal lines, such kind of pedestals are followed by coins of Nandrāja and Staṁbha, but on coin of Varāharāja, pedestal is shown by single solid horizontal line (Mirashi 1962: 97-104).

Conclusion

After surveying the coins of Dakśiṇa Kosala, it is proved that local coins of this region reflect artistic skills of the engravers. A few coins are master pieces of allied period viz.

coins of Prasannamātra of Śarabhpuriya and coins of Kalachuris. They upgrade the artistic value of coins of Dakśiṇa Kosala. The devices of these coins have shown a variety which gives an additional charm to numismatic history of this region and this fact is clear that coins devices, sealing and sculptures consist the parallel art, especially in Kalachuri period.

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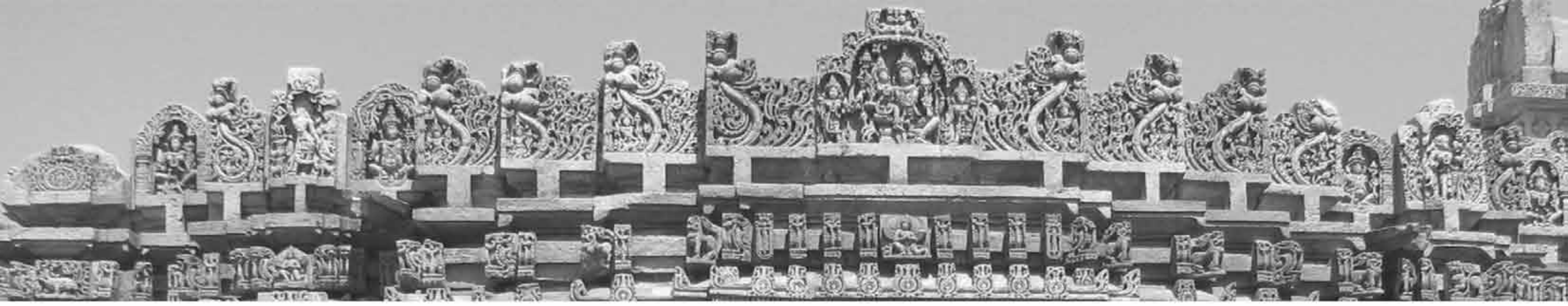
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Note: Coins can be seen in private collections of Kamal Vaid, Neeraj Agraval, Pt. Lochana Prasada Pandey and Bhanu Pratap Singh (can also seen on the facebook page of Chhattisgarh Mudra Parishad) https://www.facebook.com/pages/Chhattisgarh-Mudra-Parishad/126054207499977)

About the author

* vishi.arch@gmail.com

Dr Vishi Upadhyay is an independent researcher. She has worked as one of the team members in organising an exhibition titled 'Treasures of Chhattisgarh - with special reference to documentation of temples of Sirpur, Malhar, Jajgir champa and Kawardha' during the International conference of IAAH, Kalaniya University, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Her areas of research are numismatics and art history. She has published a number of research papers in renowned journals and books.



Deul Temple: Initial of Pandvas of Dakshina Kosala

Shivi Joshi* and Vishi Upadhyay**

The Setting

Dakshina Kosala, nearly corresponding to the boundaries of present Chhattisgarh, is not only famed for an impressive concentration of forts, but also a host of *Shaiva* antiquarian remains as revealed from recent subterranean investigations. Scholarly researches in the region brought to light a prolific number of *Shaiva* temple sites related to Panduvamsins period. Mention may be made of Malhar (Manvani 1988: 34), Sirpur (Manvani 1988: 43), Kharod (Manvani 1988: 51), Bhoramdeva (Kawardha) (Manvani 1988: 53), etc. In the sprawling settlement of Sirpur, along with a host of Jaina *vihara* and Buddhist monasteries, architectural ruins were also encountered during the excavation which speaks of an organised presence of Brahmanical in the ritual arena of Chhattisgarh. Few Epigraphic evidences also shed light on the flourishing phase of *Brahmanical* in Chhattisgarh during the Panduvamsins period i.e. *Lodhia* plates of *Sivagupta Balarjuna* (Shastri 1995: 132), Mallar plates of Sivagupta Balarjuna (Shastri 1995: 140), Sirpur stone inscription of *Sivagupta Balarjuna* (Shastri 1995: 150) and Sirpur *Gandhesvara* temple inscription of the time of *Sivagupta* (Shastri 1995: 153). The present paper assesses the Deul temple from Malhar known as *Bheemkeechak* also. It can be related to *Kapaleshwara* (Siva) temple, because its relation mentioned in Malhar plate of *Sivagupta* (Shastri 1995: 140).

About the Site

Malhar, with an impressive fortified settlement, is located about 32 km south-west of its district headquarters known as Bilaspur and 13 km from the Masturi taluk, enroute the pilgrimage centre of *Seorinarayan*. The extensive mound spread over an area of 3x2 km consists of a mud rampart with two moats i.e. internal and external. It is surrounded by three rivers viz. *Arpa* in west, *Lilaghar* in east and *Sivanath* in south. In Kalachuri inscriptions, the site was known as *Mallala* or *Mallalapatana* (Mirashi 1955: 512).

Excavations

Considering the archaeological potential of the site, it was subjected to extensive excavations in two phases - from 1975-77 (Bajpayee and Pandey 1977: 85) and from 2009-12 (Mittra 2010: 214-221). The earlier excavation was taken up by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, University of Sagar and concentrated in three places on the exterior of the fort revealing a sequence from 1000 BCE to 1300 CE divisible in five periods. While the latter excavation was undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India inside the fortified area showing a five-fold cultural period from pre Mauryan to Later Gupta's.

Epigraphy

Two inscriptions have been inscribed on pilasters of this temple. One is inscribed in right side in *Saptamatrika* characters of 9th century CE (*IAR* 1964-65: 77). Another is engraved in left side in *Devanagari* character of 11th century CE.

Structure (fig. 53)

Deul or *Devala* temple is also called as *Bhim Deul* or Bhimkeechaka due to the depiction of *Keechakas* (dwarfs) with an impressive muscular body like *Bhima* (a legendary character of *Mahabharata*). It is located adjacent to the *Motisagar* tank and in west from *Pataleshwar* temple at Malhar. It is a protected monument of Archaeological Survey of India. Conservation work has been conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1979-80 and 1980-81. Period of this temple is assumed by scholars, is *Panduvamsins* (7th-8th century CE) on the basis of art (Manvani 1988: 55) and it was built just after the temple of *Tala* (the earliest temple of Chhattisgarh region, 5th-6th century CE). Regarding the temple architecture, Deul temple

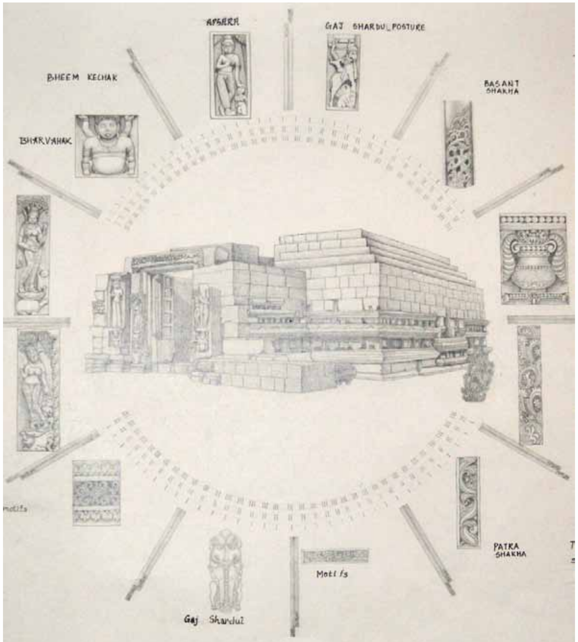


fig. 53 Line drawing of decorated motifs in the temple: Bhimkeechaka Temple

was the first experiment on stone in *Panduvamsins* period because all temples of *Panduvamsins* period were made on brick except to this temple, that's why it is contained a rare and special fact itself.

Material

To provide stability to the construction and aesthetic enhancement, entire edifice was made by blendings of sandstone. The sandstones formed by the shells deposits belonging to the upper Gonḍawana system of the lower Cretaceous period have been utilised for fashioning of few sculptures and pillars. However, brownish and yellowish varieties of sandstone were also utilised in the construction.

Ground Plan and Elevation (fig. 54-55)

Ground plan of the temple is comprised by *ardhamadapa* (half-hall articulated with the sanctum or *mandapa*), *antarala* (space in front of sanctum door; vestibule) and *garbhagriha* (sanctum). *ardamadapa* portion consists of two inscriptions. *Anatrala* and *garbhagriha* are represented by simple walls (without any carving). Elevation details are not clear. During the conservation work the ancient setup of this temple had been totally changed. Now the sequence of mouldings is as following - *Khura* (basal moulding of vedibandha), *Antarpatta* (recess between mouldings), *Kumbha* (pot), *Kapotpali* (cornice) and *Sikhara* (tower, spire) of this temple have vanished.

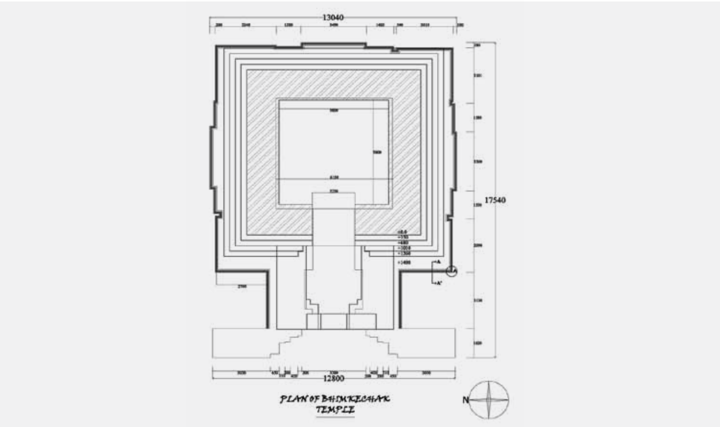
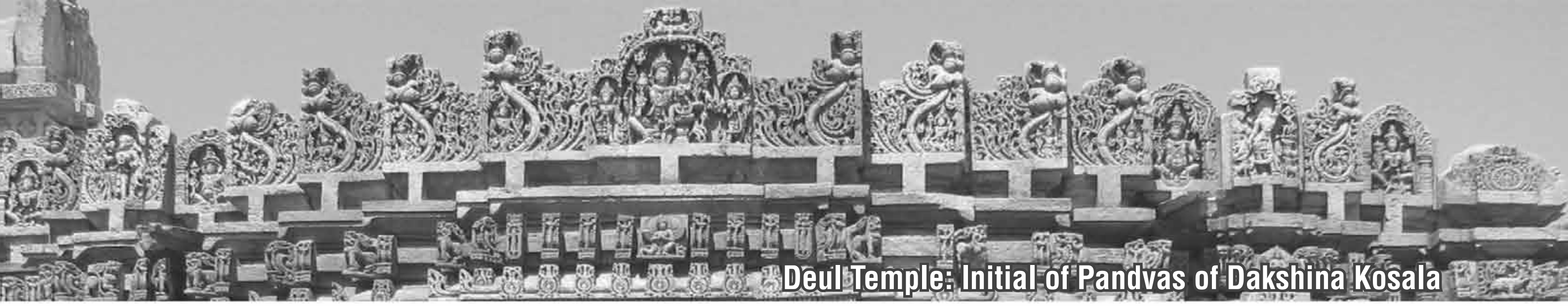


fig. 54 Ground plan: Bhimkeechaka Temple


fig. 55 Front view: Bhimkeechaka Temple



Technical details of ground plan and elevation are -

- *Garbhagriha* measured square in plan of 5.8 x 5.8 m dimensions.
- Outer dimensions measured 17.540 x 13.040 m.
- Temple is having symmetrical axis on three sides - North, South, and West are having same projections in plan as well as in elevation.
- Centralised projection on both side measured 3.3 m.
- West side centralised projection measured 3.49 m.
- East side measures 12.8 m with the entrance door jamb 3.38 m.
- Total height of temple is 1.48 m.
- Temple is having motif moulds till 2.052 m height.
- Door jamb measured 3.5 m.
- Total height of the temple measured 4.98 m.
- Temple is resting on ground level (0.00 m level), no other platform or surrounding was added to the structure.
- Motif mouldings run at a height of 1.9 m above ground level and rest of the temple is plane and having later additions.

Door jamb: The most impressive feature of this temple is the decorated entrance. Ascended with a flight of steps, beyond the pillared porch, the westerly oriented temple has an ornate gateway relieved with four *dvāraśākhās* (band of doorframe ornament). Carved out of yellowish sandstone, the innermost jambs rest on the sill. The innermost jamb is made beautiful by the panel related to Shiva religion (fig. 56). Next *śākhā* is represented by foliated creepers and scroll works save for few faint lines. Other projected *śākhā* is most attractive feature of this door jamb. Both sides of door jambs are adorned by the huge figures of Ganga and Yamuna. Both river goddesses are standing in *Tribhanga mudra*



fig. 56 Seated figure of Shiva and Parvati: Bhimkeechaka Temple

(triple bands of human figure) over the *makarsana* (pedestal in shape of crocodile) and *kurmasana* (pedestal in shape of tortoise) respectively under the mango trees. The likeness of these figures is resembled by the form of *shalbhanjika*. Both their hands are engaged with long stalk lotus and the lotus is topped by a kalasa. This style is also found on the temple of *Tala* which belongs to post-Gupta period. The outermost *śākhā* on either side of the gateway is survived by a Yaksha figure standing on *tribhaṅga* attitude on an ornate podium. Both of them are clad in a diaphanous *antarīya* (lower garments) held by a girdle with flattened central clasp and bedecked with necklace decorated with pendants, beaded *hāra*, *chhannavira* (long necklace hang around the neck covering the chest) type of ornaments, armlets, *patra-kuṇḍala* (ear ring made of leaf probably olai, palm leaf), beaded bracelets and beaded anklets. An *uttariya* (upper garments) is shown hanging down from the left arm of the left figure and the same is shown in the right arm of the right counterpart. The left one is having a beaded *mukuṭa* (crown) with triangular projection at the centre, while the right one is only having a beaded line; the hair of left one is tied with a knot at the back.



fig. 57 Dwarf image in lalitasana: Bhimkeechaka Temple

The entrance in the admirable architectural poise, balance and subtlety modelling of the figures, bespeaks the high aesthetic vision of the artisans. Below the podium of all these figures, attractive images of four handed dwarfs are represented. A very interesting dwarf image is noticed here in a seated posture in *lalitasana* (pose of comfort) and tied a band (*yogapatta*) for stability of his leg (fig. 57). Another dwarf is wearing an amulet in shape

of face of lion (fig. 58).

The Art

The outer wall of temple is adorned by various figures viz. *Mahishasurmardini*, *Ramayana* story panels, king with two female attendants by drinking wine, mythical *makaras* figures, a devotee worshipping *shivalinga*, a male performing yoga, waiting *naika*, *Shalbhanjika* playing with parrot, Lord Vishnu and *Gajshardual* (mythical form of elephant and lion). Most of the panels are designed in form of arches and the figures are fixed in centre of these arches.

Styles

Somatic Attributes

All human figures are represented by prominent features of *Panduvamsins* art. They are huge in size and shown by oval faces, elongated ears, slender-waist, rhythmic fingers, down-cast eyes and gentle smile on face exuding divine contentment are the main characteristics of art of this period. Female figure are shown by their usual delicateness but the representations of the male deities are slim and dwarfs are masculine in appearance.

Gestures

All standing figures are represented in *tribhanga mudra*. The hand gestures of *Yakshas* seems like *janana mudra* (the tips of the middle finger and of the thumb are joined together and held near the heart, with the palm of the hand turned towards the heart). They are



fig. 58 Dwarf wearing an amulet with the face of lion: Bhimkeechaka Temple

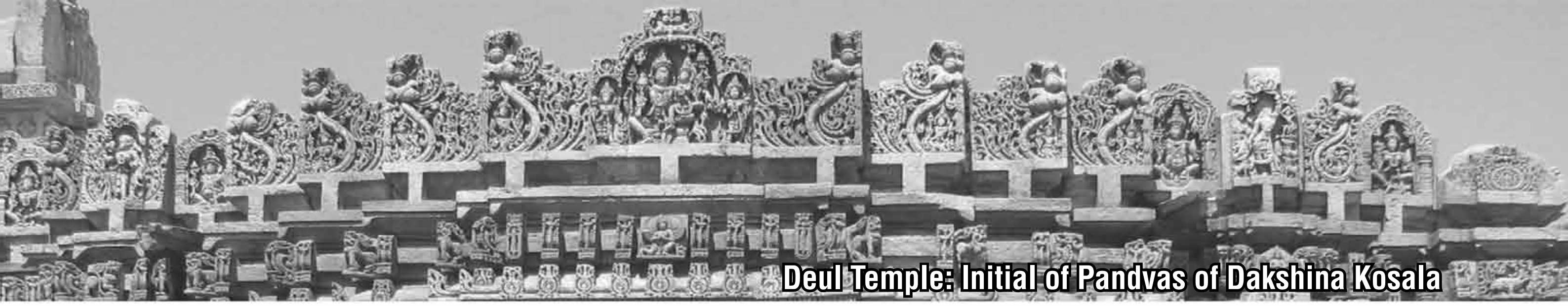
touched by the bead of *yajnopavita* on the tip of figure. Apart from this the outer wall is retrieved by a figure of male by performing the yoga. His head is hanging down against his body and both hands are rising upwards. Figure of king is seated in *lalitasana* with his two female attendants. Figures of dwarfs are noticed in *utkutasanas* (sit with heals very close to the bottom and with the back slightly curved).

Attire

Female divinities are generally robed in a tight clinging, long *antarvasa* (lower garment) reaching up to ankles, fan-shaped end of which is spread on the pericarp or dangle below the *padmapitha* (pedestal in shape of lotus) like receding lotus whorls. It is secured at the waist by a *mekhala* fashioned like a chain or twisted rope studded with a floral or gem clasp with or without flanking loops. The *stanbanda* (strip of cloth, used upon the breast) also reveals in figures of females; generally *stanbanda* is denoted to unmarried women. Apart from this *yajnopavita* (a sacred thread) is used by male and female both. The torso of standing images was usually bereft of any clothings. In some seated images, a folded *uttarasangppera,* (upper garment) worn in an *upaviti* fashion covered the left shoulder of deity, running diagonally across the chest. In other cases, the end is tucked on the left shoulder as well. Apart from this, in *Panduvamsins* art the male figures appear in special type of *doti* (lower garment). It is tight clinging with minute craving on thigh portion. The right leg is covered by *doti* above the level of knee and left leg is covered below the knee but above the ankle. A *mekhla* is shown between the legs. Another cloth is also shown on these figures which are held by the left hand of figure, this cloth covers the entire heap and front portion of body. It is prominent style for males in this period.

Coiffure and Ornaments

In this period male figure are represented by a special king of hairdo. In this temple the *yakshas* are having this kind of hairdo called as *jatamukuta* (head gear made-up of twisted matted hair). Hear braids of matted hair are taken and tied into a knot three inches in height by coiling them into one or three loops, the remaining braids being bound and taken to be right hanging (Rao 1985: 28-29) and front of the head is tied by crown. This coiffure is common for all male figures. Female divinities have been knotted in the form of single or double buns on the top of the head and tied by horizontal strings, studded



on the front by ornate crown and flowers. This kind of style is known as *kuntala*. Few locks fall on the shoulders and sides. Few shaven headed devotees are also carved on the pedestal of some of the larger images. In many specimens, they are adorned with an elaborate head-dress, tall and elegant, cylindrical *jatamukuta* adorned with a miniature Yaksha-Yakshi. Sometimes, the chignon is flanked with fluttering ribbon or fan shaped projections. The hair seemed to be arrayed in the form of loop-like curls, falling in rows around the back of the head, while the surplus tresses fell down in neatly arranged rows of loops reaching the shoulders. Coiffure of dwarfs is also interesting part of this temple. There are different kinds of hairdos noticed viz. curly hairs showing in double stairs, curly hairs combed in wavy style in centre of head, curly hairs are tied by a band covering the whole forehead and created a knot on the centre, all curly hairs are banded upwards by a ornate crown. The ear ornaments include i.e. *makara-kundalas* (made in the form of mythical animal *makara*), *patra-kundalas* or ear-studs, the interesting aspect being two different *kundalas* worn by the same image. The neck is decked in *kanthi*, a broad *hara* of *chhannavira* or *vaikakshaka* type or typical amulet type. Further the image is bedecked in multistringed *yajnopavita* or *ratnopavita*, *ratnakeyuras* (worn over the arm), *valayas*, *mekhala*, *pada-valayas* (anklets), etc.

Spatial Allocation

Spatially, the images are allocated in five places:

a. as an independent deity,

b. as companion deity,

c. in the niches of structures and as the *shakhas* of door jamb,

d. as an attendant,

e. as legendary story panels.

Shivalinga has been fixed in the *garbhagriha* as main deity. Next layer of wall is saved for inscriptions and just after this wall, many story panels viz. *kalyanasundaram* scene, *Ravanaugrana*, destruction scene of Gajasur, etc. In next *shakha* is retrieved few individual *shalbhanjika* figures. Other *shakha* appears as the main and front part of door jamb, which consists of the figures of river goddess Ganga and Yamuna. Both goddesses

have been fixed on upper part of door jamb in pattern of Gupta style. Display of river goddesses on front part of door jamb, shows its importance. Huge figures of *Yakshas* or *Dwarpalas* (door keepers) are shown on outermost doorway. Below the podium of these huge figures beautifully carved dwarfs are shown. The figures of dwarfs' in display show their lower class in contemporary society.

Allocation of sculpture on outer walls of temple is not much clear because during the conservation work, the actual place of sculpture had been changed. At present condition, back wall is adorned by the scene of *sita apharana* (abduction of lord Rama's wife by Ravana, *Ramayana* story); left sided wall is shown the image of Vishnu, few social scenes like waiting *Nayika*, scene of performing yoga, worship of *Shivalinga*, Playing *Nayika* with parrot, drunken king with his female attendant, etc. Right sided wall is adorned by image of *Mahishasurmardini,* niches in form of arches with figures of human, mythological crocodiles and peacocks.

Conclusions

The survey of imagery and structural remains unearthed proves that Malhar was a pivotal hub of Buddhism, Brahmanism and Jainism. In period of Pandivamsins the especially in time of Mahasivagupta Balarjuna, Chhattisgarh was great religious centre for Shaivism. His copper plate inscriptions are provided prolific information in this regard. Along with it, his seals also reflect that he was great devoting worshipper of Shiva. So it is proved that the deul temple might be constructed in period of Mahasivagupta Balarjuna.

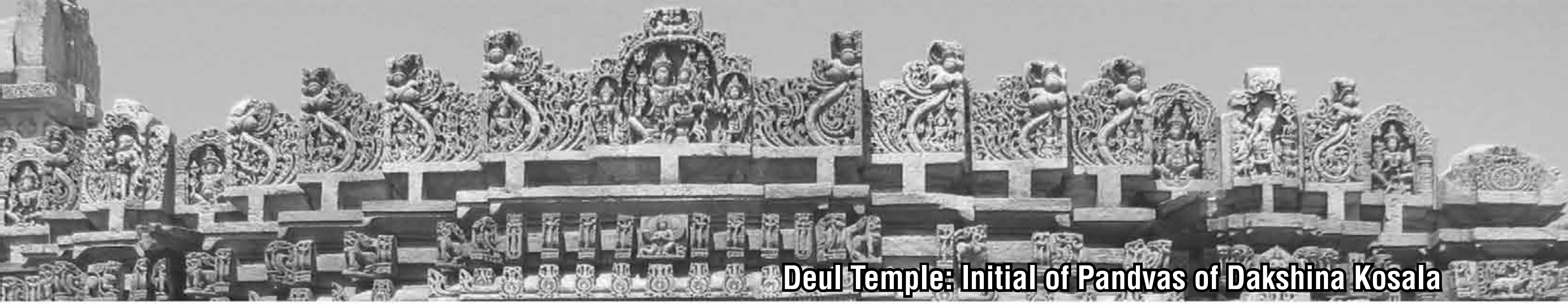
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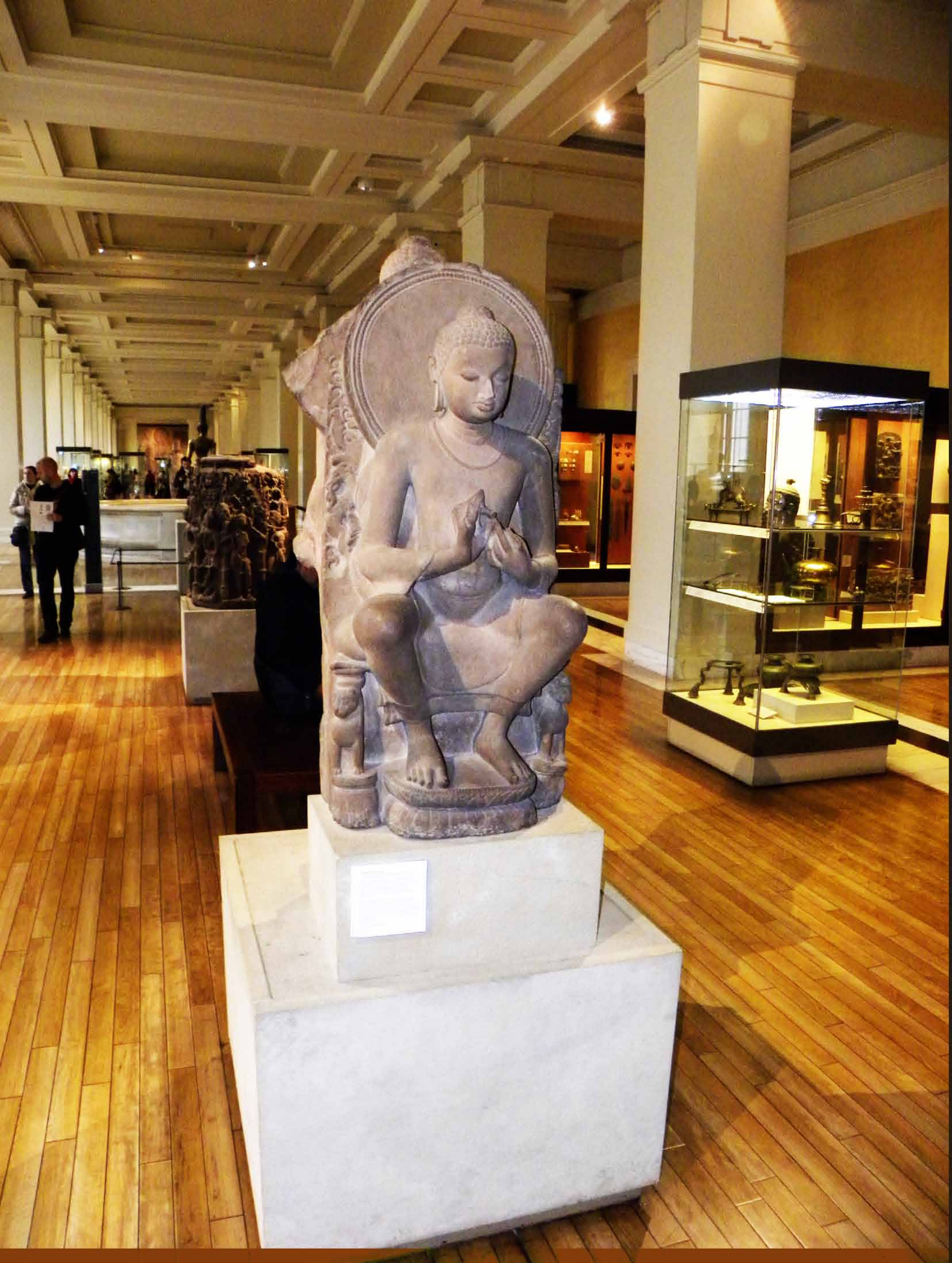
About the author

* shiviupadhyay@gmail.com

Dr Shivi Joshi, an architect by profession, is currently working as an Assistant Professor. Her areas of interest are architecture and art. She has published a number of articles in reputed journals.

** vishi.arch@gmail.com

Dr Vishi Upadhyay is an independent researcher. She has worked as one of the team members in organising an exhibition titled 'Treasures of Chhattisgarh - with special reference to documentation of temples of Sirpur, Malhar, Jajgir champa and Kawardha' during the International conference of IAAH, Kalaniya University, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Her areas of research are numismatics and art history. She has published a number of research papers in renowned journals and books.



Museums



Management of Archaeological Site Museums with Special Reference to Museum at Purana Qila, Delhi

Sulekha Banerjee* and Vinay Kumar**

Museum is the device that our culture has developed for the transmission of ideas to a large number of people through the exhibition/ display of artifacts/ genuine objects. Based on the nature of collection, museums have been classified in various types. Archaeological site museums are one amongst them with the aim to concentrate on the archaeological significance of a particular site based upon the relics found at the site. The concept of site museums is well elucidated by Hargreaves, one of the former Director General of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as - *it has been the policy of the Government of India to keep the small and movable antiquities, recovered from the ancient site, in close association with the remains to which they belong, so that they may be studied amid their natural surroundings and not lose focus by being transported* (Markham and Hargreaves 1936: 10). Archaeological Site museums are examined not only as a centre of art and heritage but have stimulated feelings of nationalism as remarked by Markham and Hargreaves.

In the words of Sir Mortimer Wheeler "*Site museums are an important addition to sites, which are themselves of instructional interest, such as Delhi fort, Sarnath, Nalanda, etc. But a Site museum difficult to access and situated half a mile from a site of which nothing can be seen above ground is almost valueless. The site in question is Kondapur in Andhra Pradesh, where a curator of the Survey has been at some pains to arrange a Site Museum, which few people are ever likely to visit. It is essential that a site be worthy of its site museum*" (Banerjee 1990:23).

The site museums are entirely based on archaeological material. These museums are purposely created, so as to retain the archaeological interest that can best be studied in relation and in close proximity to the group, style and architecture of the building or site to which they belong. Thus, the basic criterion for justifying a site museum comprises of numerous finds from the site or adjacent sites, excavated or loose architectural or

sculptural members, impressive archaeological or structural remains at the adjacent sites, and accessibility of the site and museum to the visitors.

Archaeological site museums have been developed as a result of excavation or scientific clearance carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India to preserve and display excavated material on the spot. Initially, these museums were created without any proper thought and a few developed as store house of antiquities without requisite ideas about planning and preservation. With only some exceptions, many of these have failed to serve the needs either of research or of popular education. In some of these museums, articles of potential value are left in miserable condition. Besides this, hardly any care has been taken to group the objects and arrange them scientifically. But there are certain museums like the one at Sarnath which has a proper display technique and adequate labeling.

Like other museums, archaeological site museums serve as a mirror of the region/ area and it reflects the facets of its past. Thus, to know the vast and rich cultural heritage of the country, and to bring the sense of belongingness amongst people living in different parts of India, proper management of site museums is necessary. The museums also act as living areas with full range of cultural-cum-educational activities. They have grown and developed for the people, who care for the past, derive knowledge from the exhibits, and also from the cultural and educational activities.

There are eight basic motives to preserve the objects of the past - curiosity, understanding, control, belief, aesthetic value, memories, veneration of age, and passage of legacy to the posterity. In order to preserve and protect the antiquities, the site museums should have a perfect coordination between the internal requirements of curating the collection and meeting the requirements of its visitors. Both these aspects are the two faces of a coin. If a museum is only concerned with its internal functioning such as management of collection, research of the reserve collections and documentation and doesn’t take its viewers into account then the main purpose of a site museum is lost. A good museum is obviously visitor friendly, educative and entertaining. It considers the need of its society and develops effective means to expand the boundary of its community by making its collections accessible to its visitors.

Now a days the notion of site museum as a collection for scholarly use has been largely replaced by the idea of the museum as a means of communication. These museums are now being considered into a paradoxical position. On one hand, the funding is inadequate and on the other hand they have great potentiality for identity construction. Because of these factors, there is lack of proper management in the site museums. One of the main reasons of this mismanagement is lack of manpower. A number of archaeological site museums of ASI have no permanent staff which is one of the most significant problems.

Apart from all these, some of the archaeological site museums are lacking latest technologies in terms of display and exhibition. There are a few exceptions though such as museums at Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh), Purana Qila (Delhi) and Ropar (Punjab) where lighting arrangements have been done scientifically and aesthetically. The use of touch screen at Sarnath is appreciable. The main problems encountered in modernization of these site museums are an ad-hoc and unplanned automation of the museums; absence of trained manpower, infra-structural inadequacies such as availability of copier machines, scanners, electricity, communication facilities specially for the museums which are located in rural or remote areas. There are a number of other technical problems as well likewise no standardised vocabulary, standardised classification system or cataloguing code, etc. that makes the management of antiquities a difficult task. Another aspect, which is worth mentioning, is that, there is a drastic difference between the other museums that are located in urban areas and the archaeological site museums, which are located in remote areas, in respect of infrastructure management and organization and staff patterns. While there is immense scope of work to be done in the site museums, there is minimum infrastructure to support it; whereas other museums are much better off in this respect. Another problem, which is often encountered, is that the labels in most site museums are not in local language that is an obstruction in proper dissemination of information to the local people. There should be labels in the regional language besides Hindi and English.

Not only this, but the focus should change from collections management to content management in these site museums. The museum’s internal information system needs to evolve from their focus on collections management - essentially the data entry and retrieval of data such as numbers, dates and names - to content management systems,

able to store the truly valuable, enriched information that museums produce on daily basis, but that does not make its way to information management systems.

The museum information services should not only be confined to formal education alone but also to informal education as well, in order to develop museum-oriented community education. The visitors to the museum fall into four general categories: local clientele, tourists, research scholars and teachers. To attract the masses into the museum, these archaeological site museums as are closer and nearer to their cultural context should be promoted, so that they may easily and readily establish communication with the displays. For this reason, the information communicated through the displayed objects, is of a great importance, and need to be organised and managed effectively.

Archaeological site museums are the symbol of a living culture. They are more than mere repositories of material culture. They have grown and developed in the service of the people. People need to be aware of this, because it accounts for their present, and will influence how they can create their future. Therefore, dissemination of information about the collection, and the management of that information are very important for the museums. Without proper information the main purpose of these site museums cannot be achieved. Hence, the management aspects of the site museum needs to be reworked that will develop an understanding and relationship between museums and their audiences. A very important problem confronting the site museums is that there is no proper conservation/ preservation policy. Since management encompasses all facets, this aspect cannot be overlooked.

Archaeological Survey of India has some good examples of well managed museums as well amongst which Purana Qila in Delhi is one.

Archaeological Site Museum, Purana Qila, Delhi

The Archaeological Site Museum at Purana Qila is located in the cells abutting to the main fortification wall on the southern flank of the main entrance gate. The cells, which were in dilapidated condition, were conserved thoroughly by the Archaeological Survey of India to make them suitable for accommodating the

museum (fig. 59). In fact, the beginning of the museum in its present location may be traced back to 1986 when the ASI was asked to organise an exhibition 'Zar-e-Zameem' at Purana Qila highlighting the history and culture of Delhi on the basis of archaeological finds as part of '*Apna-Utsav*'. The cell where the museum is located was hurriedly spruced up in less than seven days to mount the exhibition (fig. 60).



fig. 59 Front view: Archaeological Site Museum, Purana Qila (source: Archaeological Survey of India)

The site museum at Purana Qila has perfect historical and environmental setting with monuments like Qila-i-Kuhna and Sher Mandal located well within. Because of the central location and proximity to

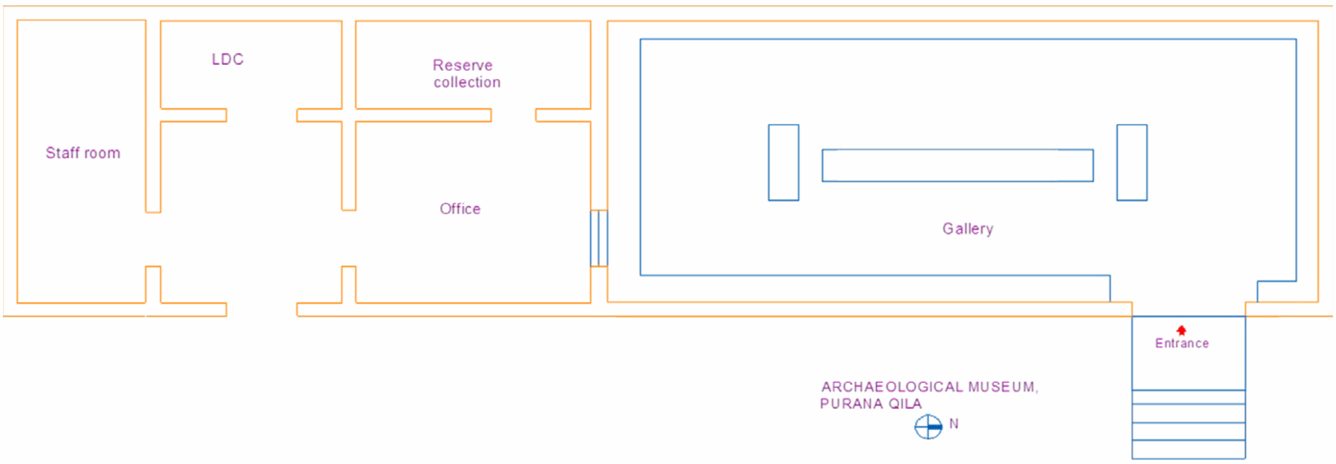


fig. 60 Plan: Archaeological Site Museum, Purana Qila

Delhi Zoological Park, a large number of people visit Purana Qila every day. As is so well known, it was the Mughal emperor Humayun, who had decided to build a new city at the site of Indraprastha and named it Din Panah. In 1533 CE, work began on the Fort

and the new city, and by 1538 CE, the construction with its formidable walls and three imposing gateways was completed (Mani 1997). However, it is worth mentioning that the credit for completion of the construction of various buildings inside Purana Qila goes to Sher Shah after he defeated Humayun in 1540 CE.



fig. 61 Excavated Site: Purana Qila (source: Archaeological Survey of India)

The representative materials including the pottery recovered during the excavations in the complex of Purana Qila (*IAR* 1969-70: 4-6; 1970-71: 8-11; 1971-72: 7-8; 1972-73: 9) from the stratified levels of each period have been put on display in the museum systematically and in aesthetic manner following the established norms of museology (fig. 61). Since, it is a site museum; the objects and the characteristic pottery of each period have been displayed in wall showcases (fig. 62). These teak wood wall showcases have been veneered with waterproof plywood and laminated sheets. Each wall showcase measures 2.30 m in length, 1.30 m in height and 0.35 m in depth. The excavated finds have been displayed against the wall of the showcases with the help of 'L' shaped transparent acrylic brackets so that they do



fig. 62 Dish, Chinese blue-and-white porcelain: Archaeological Site Museum, Purana Qila (source: Archaeological Survey of India)

not look significant and get merged into the background, which is mounted with off-white raw silk fabric. Besides, minor antiquities and full pots have also been displayed on stepped and stand pedestals, again of acrylic, at the base of the showcases (fig. 63-64). While two showcases each have on display the excavated material pertaining to Mauryan (I), Rajput (VI) and Mughal (VIII) periods the material recovered from the strata of the remaining periods have been exhibited in one showcase each. A terracotta elephant measuring 1.47 x 0.84 x 0.51 m has also been exhibited on a stand pedestal. There are in all 325 antiquities pertaining to excavations conducted at Purana Qila which have been displayed in the museum.



fig. 63 Ear ornaments of terracotta and necklace of semi-precious stones, Sunga period: Archaeological Site Museum, Purana Qila (source: Archaeological Survey of India)



fig. 64 Antiquities on display: Archaeological Site Museum, Purana Qila (source: Archaeological Survey of India)

The exhibits have been provided with individual or group labels depending upon the display scheme and location. The labels using digital technique are silk-screen printed against the matching background of either the laminated sheet or the raw silk fabric. The gallery is painted with white acrylic emulsion. However, the extant original patches of plaster have not been painted to retain the antiquarian look of the interiors. The lime concrete flooring has been covered with natural teak wood tiles.

The museum is provided with write-ups in Hindi and English, which include details of each cultural period, introduction of Purana Qila, pre-historic Delhi, historical background of

Delhi, archaeological investigations carried out at various sites in Delhi, ancient names of Delhi, ancient cities of Delhi, monuments at Purana Qila, etc. Besides, nine coloured maps showing distribution of Painted Grey Ware, and Northern Black Polished Ware; the seven cities of Delhi, Kushan sites, extent of empire during Sultanate and Mughal periods, pre-historical sites in Delhi, etc. have also been put on display in the museum at appropriate available wall surface to educate the visitors.

Although mainly dedicated to Purana Qila, an effort has also been made in the museum to provide a detail introduction of ancient Delhi historically as well as culturally, so that they may get themselves acquainted with the ancient site in relation to prehistoric, proto-historic, historical, medieval and Mughal background through the archaeological material, write-ups and photographs. The museum has shaped up well and is quite interactive.

Conclusions

It can be summed up in a nutshell, that the aspects of management for the site museum must be thought of, a guide to the collection has to be published, vital records and microfilming programs have to be started, major research projects have to be prepared and archival material to be used for class room lessons have to be distributed throughout the country. There is hardly any guide book available on site museums. If emphasis is laid on publishing of guide books on site museums, the students and all categories of visitors will get an additional advantage. The site museum might be regarded as machinery for producing progressive subjects. Its routine is to serve and to induct the visitor into an improving relationship to the self. It might also be seen as providing an opportunity to its visitors to civilise them. In doing so, the museum should provide its visitors with a set of resources, through which they might actively insert themselves within a particular vision of history, by fashioning themselves to contribute to its development.

Along with site museums if interpretation centre is promoted by the ASI, it will have a better impact on the visitors. The newly constructed museum building as in the case of Chanderi and Khajuraho can plan an interpretation centre within the same museum building. The museums at Red Fort, Delhi have been decided to be shifted to the Colonial Barracks from its present premises i.e. Mumtaz Mahal and Naubat Khana. These buildings can also have a corner for interpretation centre.

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About the author

* suban13@gmail.com

Dr Sulekha Banerjee is a post doctorate fellow working on Indian Art and Cultural Heritage. She has completed her doctorate in Museology and has worked with a number of well-known organisations including Archaeological Survey of India, and National Museum Institute, New Delhi. She was also associated in various projects of Cultural Resource Conservation Initiative, Astrolinks, etc.

** vinaykumar166@yahoo.com

Dr Vinay Kumar is working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology at Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh. He has also worked in organisations like Archaeological Survey of India, Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (IGNCA) and Indian Archaeological Society. He has participated and supervised a number of archaeological excavations at sites like Lahuradeva, Bhirrana, Baror, Hansi, etc. He is well versed in Persian, German, Sanskrit, Oriya, Bangla and Maithili languages. He has published many articles and research paper in national and international journals.



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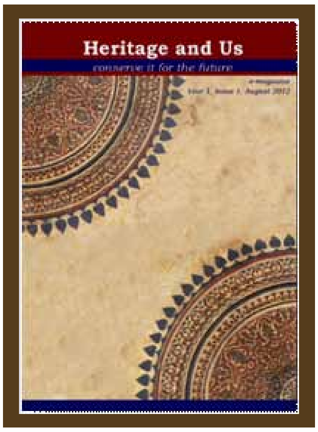
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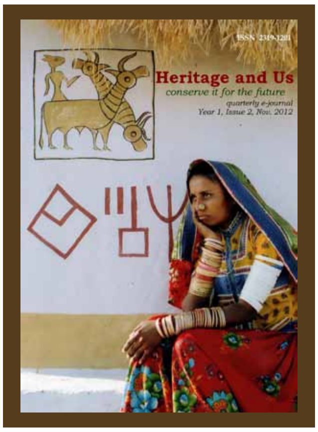
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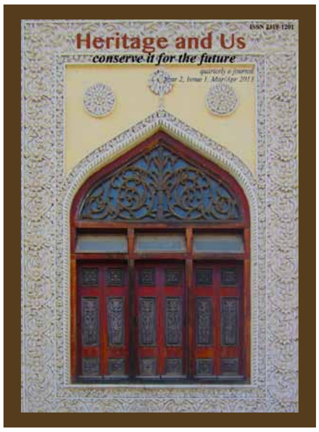
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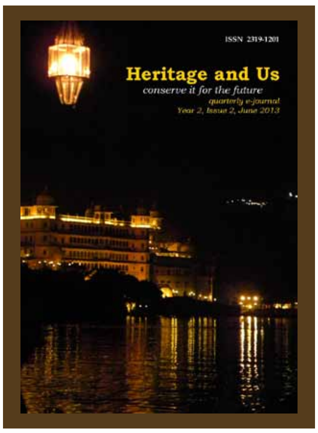
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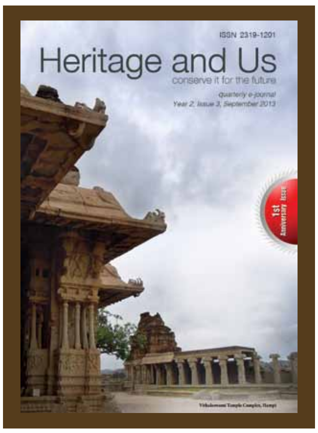
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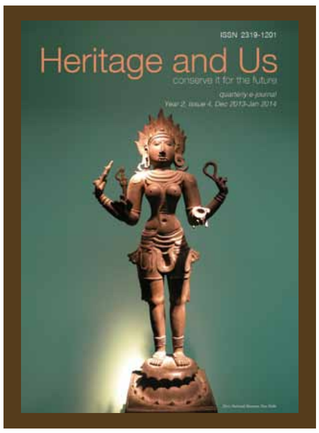


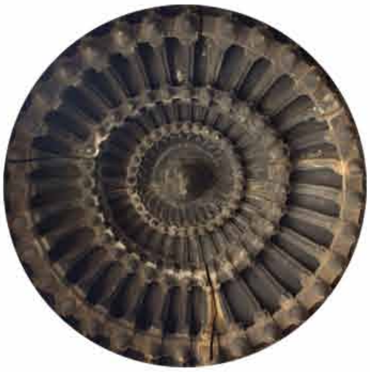












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